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# LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE

No. CXLIII.]

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[SEPTEMBER 1894

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# THERE IS NOTHING NEW

Under the

BUT !!

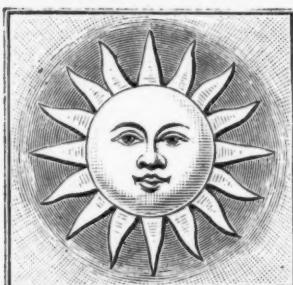
A NEW USE

FOR AN OLD AND

Universal Sanitary Remedy.

THE ELEPHANT

TOSSED IT OFF LIKE A MAN.



The Prompt Mother of Useful Knowledge  
**NECESSITY: Its best use WISDOM !!**

I have just received a letter from a friend (a Military Chaplain) in India, who relates the following anecdote:—A police officer and some friends were out tiger shooting in the Jungle (at Bareilly, N.W.P.) with several elephants. One elephant was taken seriously ill, and they did not know what to give it or what to do with it. A young officer said he always took ENO'S "FRUIT SALT" when he felt bad, and it always did him good. "Well," they said, "have you got any?" "Yes. I have a new bottle." "Well, fetch it." So the ENO'S "FRUIT SALT" was brought, and after a consultation it was decided to give the elephant a dose. So they emptied the whole bottle into a pail of water and stirred it up, and the elephant tossed it off like a man, and was soon after all right again.

"I have myself derived great benefit from ENO'S "FRUIT SALT," and feeling sure the above will interest you,—I remain, dear Sir, yours faithfully, JUNGLE.—BLACKHEATH, July 1894."

AT HOME: My Household God. ABROAD: My 'Vade Mecum.'

A GENERAL OFFICER, writing from Ascot on January 2nd, 1886, says:—  
"Blessings on your "FRUIT SALT"! I trust it is not profane to say so, but, in common parlance, I swear by it. Here stands the cherished bottle, on the chimney-piece of my sanctum, my little idol—at home, my household god; abroad, my *vade mecum*. Think not this is the rhapsody of a hypochondriac. No; it is only the outpouring of a grateful heart. The fact is, I am, in common I dare say with numerous old fellows of my age (67), now and then troubled with a tiresome liver. No sooner, however, do I use your cheery remedy than exit pain—"Richard is himself again!" So highly do I value your composition that, when taking it, I grudge even the little sediment that will always remain at the bottom of the glass. I give, therefore, the following advice to those wise persons who have learned to appreciate its inestimable benefits:—

"When ENO'S SALT" betimes you take,  
No waste of this elixir make;

But drain the dregs, and lick the cup  
Of this, the perfect pick-me-up."

Writing again on January 24th, 1888, he adds:—Dear Sir,—A year or two ago I addressed you in grateful recognition of the never-failing virtues of your world-famed remedy. The same old man in the same strain now salutes you with the following—

"When time, who steals our years away,  
Shall steal our pleasures too,

ENO'S FRUIT SALT will prove our stay,  
And still our health renew."

**HEADACHE AND DISORDERED STOMACH.**—After suffering two-and-a-half years from severe headache and disordered stomach, and after trying almost everything without any benefit, I was recommended to try ENO'S "FRUIT SALT," and before I had finished one bottle I found it doing me a great deal of good, and am restored to my usual health; and others I know that have tried it have not enjoyed such good health for years.—Yours most truly, ROBERT HUMPHREYS, Post Office, Barnsford.

**DRAWING AN OVERDRAFT ON THE BANK OF LIFE.**—Excitement, feverish colds, chills, fevers, blood poisons, throat irritation, &c., late hours, fagged, unnatural excitement, breathing impure air, too rich food, alcoholic drink, gouty, rheumatic, and other blood poisons, influenza, sleeplessness, biliousness, sick headache, skin eruptions, pimples on the face, want of appetite, sourness of stomach, &c. Use ENO'S "FRUIT SALT." It prevents diarrhoea, and removes it in the early stages. It is pleasant, cooling, health-giving, refreshing, and invigorating.

The value of ENO'S "FRUIT SALT" cannot be told. Its success in Europe, Asia, Africa, America, Australia, and New Zealand proves it.

**CAUTION.**—Examine each Bottle, and see that the Capsule is marked ENO'S "FRUIT SALT." Without it, you have been imposed upon by a worthless imitation.

PREPARED only at ENO'S "FRUIT SALT" WORKS, LONDON, S.E.

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# LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

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SEPTEMBER 1894.

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## *The Matchmaker.*

Human life is nought but error.—SCHILLER.

BY L. B. WALFORD.

### CHAPTER XLIII.

TOSH LOSES A LETTER.

THE invalid stranger at Carnoustie Castle was an object of much interest to the country-side, and to no one more than its 'daft man.'

Tosh could not make the matter out at all.

It was incomprehensible to him that anyone should be sick or sorry who had enough to eat and drink; and how a gentleman who had grand shining boots in which to walk about the moors should catch a loose stone and fall over it, was a mystery altogether beyond the reach of his understanding.

'He'll be fine and warm up thonder!' he would mutter, glancing up at the castle windows enviously; for however mild the weather might be, it was only when the sun shone in his strength, or when Tosh was permitted to toast himself by Mrs. Alison's fire, that the poor idiot had anything of a comfortable glow in his veins. 'Fegs! but it's a fine thing to be ill at Carnoustie Castle!'

'Carnoustie,' he demanded, suddenly, one day, 'are ye no gaun to bid me ben the hooss to see him, Carnoustie? It wad be neeborly—me that sees but few sick fowk. 'Deed, I was thinkin' ye wad hae budden me gang ben to see the captain afore noo.'

'Aweel, Tosh'—Lord Carnoustie's eyes twinkled, but he hesitated. Then he turned to Penelope, who was by his side. 'What do you think? Shall I take him in? Would Bob appreciate him?'

'I don't quite know,' replied Penelope, whose perceptions were acute, and who had remarked that Captain Ainslie was more likely to be sensitive on certain points than his host. 'Suppose you tell him to come over to-morrow, Sunday, and to make himself very *nice*, and *clean*, and all that first,' she whispered. 'Sunday is his clean day, isn't it? And look here, uncle, to soften his disappointment, I'll take him in to Ailsie's room now, if you like, and get her to give him something.'

'Ay, that'll do. It would be a shame to refuse the poor fellow; but certainly he is at his worst to-day; he always runs down towards the end of the week; but mind, Penelope, he gets something; and tell Ailsie he is to be let in to-morrow when he calls; and I'm to be told—'

'What's a' this bletherin' aboot?' burst in Tosh, looking sternly at his patron; 'there's nae need for sae muckle talk. I'm sayin a'body's been in to see the captain but me, and it's no freenly to keep me oot, for a' I'm daft. There's plenty as daft as me.'

('He's right there. Troth, there would be a couple of them.' Lord Carnoustie jogged Penelope's arm and sniggered delightedly.)

'Ye're no that wise-like yersel,' concluded Tosh, taking umbrage, as he was apt to do, at mirth which he had not intended to provoke.

'Ye're no that polite to say sae, Tosh. Do I ever threep at you that you're no wise-like? 'Deed, ye're the maist wise-like lad in the place when ye tak' the fancy. Ye're a deal mair wise-like than—oh!—ah!—yes,' in his natural accent, responding to Penelope's warning pressure. 'Yes, it would hardly do if he came out with the sentiment to our friend upstairs. But we must let him have his way, if it were but for the fun of it. Hey, Tosh, my man, speak to me noo,' reverting to Tosh's dialect and idioms. 'See the captain ye shall—'

Tosh's threatening brow relaxed.

'He'll be fain to see ye, Tosh—'

Tosh beamed all over.

'But hark ye, Tosh, Saturday—the day's Saturday—noo, Saturday's no jist the best day i' the week for payin' veesits,' observed Lord Carnoustie with a soothing colloquial air. 'The Sabbath's a better day, Tosh. Folks like you an' me are i' their braws; they canna be fashed to put on their braws ilka day; but

on the Sabbath they aye do, mind ye that,' with emphasis, 'and when they hae been to the kirk they can luik in at the castle i' the byegaun—about dinner-time, eh, Tosh? We'll say neist Sabbath Day, Tosh, that's the morn—the captain will be a' prepared for ye the morn—and to-day—the noo,' he added, hastily, 'Miss Penelope,' unloosing her hand from his arm as he spoke, 'will tak' ye in, and Mrs. Alison will gie ye a bit sup.'

Tosh resigned himself. 'Aweel, maybe that'll do,' said he, with a sigh. 'But I had gotten a wee compliment for him here,' putting his hand up to his broad Tam o' Shanter bonnet, 'aweel, it's nae matter. I'll bring it the morn,' ruminating.

'What's that he is saying?' inquired Lord Carnoustie, not catching the drift of the remarks.

'I'm sayin' it's nae matter,' repeated Tosh, loudly. Then with a severe glance, 'What else suld I be sayin'? Am I no to hae wee words wi' mysel' as weel as ithers? I hae my secrets too,' with obvious reference to the colloquy which had roused his suspicion before. 'But I'll gang in—I'll gang in,' he added, recovering; 'gif she'll come wi' me,' pointing to the young lady whose name he never ventured upon, 'and she's to say I'm to hae a braw sup, is she no, Carnoustie? Aweel, ye're a guid man, Carnoustie; an' sae I aye tell them whae threep ye're thrawn and dour—but ye might hae let me see the captain—'

'Hurry him in, or we shall have it all over again;' and Lord Carnoustie acknowledged with a courteous gesture the idiot's parting salute, always performed in the most elaborate and punctilious manner—and turned to while away the remainder of the afternoon among his farm-steadings.

It struck Penelope that Ailsie looked ill and worried, Ailsie had been in the most benignant of humours during the past weeks. Nothing was wrong with her; nobody was out of favour; and if there were the faintest indications of a change of atmosphere on her brow, Penelope knew only too well the magic touch which never failed to restore it to placidity. She had but to hint at Redwood's suit, but to remark that he was never away from the place, and to surmise smilingly that something besides shooting must be keeping him on at Inverashet, now that the birds were wild and his bags scanty, to see Ailsie's sternest lip relax.

'Gae wa' wi' ye noo!' the old woman would retort, laughing all over, and looking over her shoulder as though to be sure no one else heard. 'Has he said anything to the captain, think ye?' one day she demanded, suddenly.

'Couldn't say, indeed. I haven't listened at the keyhole lately ;' but though Penelope affected to jest, there was an ugly meaning in the words. Indeed she had never forgiven Mina that treacherous act ; and now and again would catch herself wondering whether it had been a solitary one of its kind or not ? She now proceeded gaily. 'Still, to judge by outward appearance, which is pretty much all I have to go upon, I should not judge Captain Ainslie to be the person one would choose for a confidence, nor should I judge Mr. Redwood the man to make it. Mr. Redwood is the true type of an Englishman, "Close buttoned to the chin, broadcloth without," and a—ah ! that's what we can't be sure of, Ailsie ; has he or has he not "a warm heart within" ? Eh, Ailsie ? What d'ye think ?'

'I kenna what ye're talkin' aboot,' quoth Ailsie, stolidly.

'Why, about Mr. Redwood's heart. I was quoting poetry to you, though you did not know it. The poetry is about a man who was

Close buttoned to the chin,  
Broadcloth without, and a warm heart within.

The point is, whether Mr. Charles Redwood, who is certainly "close buttoned to the chin"—(and who looked remarkably well buttoned up to his ears in his white mackintosh this afternoon)—has the other requisite of a true man. For his own sake, Ailsie—the speaker paused, and her tone changed to one of serious significance—"for his own sake, I am inclined to hope—not."

Ailsie was busy washing some fine old lace in a bowl. She did not reply.

'A woman's heart is rather a troublesome possession, Ailsie.'

'Whiles it is,' said Ailsie, drily.

'You know what I mean,' rejoined Penelope, scrutinising the old woman's features ; 'of course you can answer me or not as you please ; of course Mina is far more to you than I am, or ever could be ; and you may not like to have me put my secret thoughts into words ; but yet, Ailsie, I should be so glad if you could chase it away, if you could laugh at me for it, be angry with me for it, say that I do Mina an injustice and an injury—it is a shame that I who have known her so lately should be so severe upon her'—she broke off suddenly.

'Aweel, ye'd best say it oot noo,' responded the nurse in the same matter-of-fact tone. 'Syne it's there, it's best oot. What ails ye at her ? What's wrang wi' her ?'

'She is so strange—so unreal. She never seems to me as if she dared to be her real self even with *me*; and sometimes when she has been quite nice and natural for a little while, and I begin to think it must be more in my fancy than anything else that she is—is always acting a part, she will quite suddenly and without the slightest provocation break out into that bitter unfeeling tone she used the first day I was here, when she gave me such a tirade! Well, I think I understand up to a certain point. She has been ill-treated and resents it; she has a small spiteful mind which dwells and dwells upon its injuries; but, Ailsie, what I can't understand is about—about Mr. Redwood. I may speak to you, Ailsie, because you are one of ourselves—'

'Oo, ay, ye can speak to me.'

'She thinks he cares for her, and she has as good as told me she is willing to—you know; and she certainly goes on just as she did when—I mean just as a girl would do who has a lover; but now listen, for within lies the puzzle—all this is *behind his back*. It is *to me* she looks conscious, and blushes, and is breathless and flurried, and—altogether. To him, and before him, she is as cold as a stone, or rather she is as phlegmatic as a lump of putty. She takes whatever shape I choose to pinch her into. I give her a little push and say in her ear "Go over there" (to where he is, you know), and she goes as if I had shot her! I poke her down into a chair next an empty one at luncheon, and she sort of falls into it, and gapes at me helplessly across the table, with a "What-on-earth-do-you-expect-of-me-next?" look. It is enough to make one laugh and cry together. But, mark you, he for his part does not seem to resent anything; he is as polite as possible; yet it must often be hard work toiling as he does to make conversation. Now Mr. Redwood is not a man with whom conversation ought to be hard work. He is quiet; but—oh, I could make him talk—I could make him laugh. He was never bored, never absent-minded with me —'

'Deed, then, what for did e'er he leave you?' interposed Ailsie, bluntly.

'Leave me? He never left me. There was nothing to "leave," but Penelope gave a little sigh, and the colour in her cheek mounted and faded again. 'I only spoke as I did, because I wish to discover if I can what it is in Mina that makes her so cold, so impassive towards Mr. Redwood? Can she, do you think, love *anyone*?' The last sentence was uttered imperatively, sharply.

Ailsie folded the bands of lace, and carefully refolded them.

‘Miss Penelope’—she paused, drew up her lips, and straightened the edges of the lace. Her fingers were nervously accurate in every movement. ‘Miss Penelope, gif there had been anither hame, an’ anither mither, there wad hae been anither bairn. Can she loe ony man, say ye? She can. Will she? I kenna.’ Her voice fell; she whispered again beneath her breath, ‘I kenna.’

This had happened a few days before Penelope took in Tosh to be fed and consoled.

‘I am sorry to trouble you, Ailsie dear,’ she said, after a glance at the old woman’s face. ‘I’m afraid it’s not a very good time for you to be worried by Tosh, but uncle Carnoustie told me to bring him in, and particularly wished him attended to. Do you mind?’ Now when Penelope added that little quavering ‘Do you mind?’ to any appeal of the kind, few people felt they did mind, and Ailsie for one would always answer placably.

‘Tosh, is it?’ she said, looking across to where Tosh stood at the open door; ‘aweil, Tosh, ye mun come in; though it’s no yer day for comin’ to the castle, and ye ken that fine. Tak’ aff yer bannet, and sit ye doon. I’ll see to him,’ to Penelope, who, however, still lingered. Something in the old nurse’s face and still more in her chastened accents aroused her attention.

‘Aren’t you well, dear?’ she said, tenderly. ‘What is the matter? Is it one of your attacks coming on?’ Ailsie was subject to ‘attacks;’ her heart was weak. ‘Is there anything I can get for you?’

The nurse hesitated. ‘I’m no that weel—but I’m no that ill neither,’ she made answer with a half smile, half sigh. ‘We a’ bit to hae oor aff an’ on days, ye ken. Na, na, Penelope; tak nae heed, my bairn. I’m weel eneugh, and I’ll see to Tosh. Tosh, dearie, sit ye doon——’

Tosh, wondering and somewhat awestruck, obeyed.

‘Yer bannet, my man, afore the young leddy,’ Ailsie mildly reminded him.

Mechanically Tosh removed his Tam o’ Shanter. A shower of hazel nuts in clusters fell upon the floor.

The sight recalled the idiot to himself. ‘Losh me! what for did ye mak’ me do that?’ he demanded indignantly, holding fast the empty ‘Tammy’ by its worsted knob. ‘I kenned there was guid reason why I wadna tak’ it frae my heid, but I had no

mind what. Gif ye had let me alone'—and he regarded the strewn nuts gloomily.

Penelope was already on her knees gathering them together. She did not, if the truth were known, care over much for the task—for Tosh's fiery faggot of hair, untouched in all probability from one year to another, had been in contact with the green clusters—but Ailsie looked so depressed and sad, seemed so much out of spirits, that even a trifle such as an overturned cargo of nuts on her carpet must not be suffered to fret her further.

'Eh, Miss Penelope, ye're guid. I canna stoop mysel', I'm that stiff and auld. Thank ye, dearie, thank ye. He meant nae harm, puir fule'—aside—'whiles he forgets, and—and we a' hae oor days. See to him noo, what's he aboot? Rummagin himsel' ower frae tap to tae for the rest o' them! See to him noo!' aroused to a faint interest and amusement by the sight of Tosh, with fire in his face, and business in every motion, distractedly hunting in every corner of his capacious person, with obvious expectations of some grand result.

'Whaur is 't? Wha's taen it frae me? What hae I dune wi' it?' muttered the poor fellow to himself, consternation gradually stealing over his countenance as the search proved fruitless. 'I had it wi' me—I ken I had—when I went i' the wood to pu' the nits.'

'What is it, Tosh? What have you lost?'

'It's no for you.' Tosh jerked back as though afraid of being touched. 'Let me abee, an I'll fin' it. I ne'er lost sicc an thing afore—no me. Naebody can say but Tosh is aye trusty. An he gied me a saxpence to gie it safe,' beginning to whimper.

'Well, let me put the nuts back in your cap, at any rate,' said Penelope, who was not eager to hold them longer.

'Na, keep them, they're for the captain, and I was to hae seen him mysel', an Carnoustie said I suld—'

'Oh, this was the present you were to bring to-morrow? Well, Tosh, I'm sure Captain Ainslie will be proud to receive them. Ailsie, have you a basket, or anything?'

'Ye can tak them i' my bannet,' Tosh sprang eagerly forward, 'but mind I get it again,' suddenly snatching it back by the tassel, 'I hae nae ither—'

'That being the case you had better keep it. It would be a risk to send it out of your sight; and see, Tosh, perhaps that is what you have lost; inside the pouch, there; look—that white thing—it looks like a letter.'

Tosh made a snatch. 'It's it ! Loshy me ! It's it !' he cried joyously ; 'I hae na lost it after a', taking out an envelope and regarding it fondly. Then, thrusting the missive into his breast, 'Nits, or no nits, ye'se no gang intil my Tammy again, makin' a fule o' a puir daft man ; I hae ye safe this time,' muttering.

'Is it for any of us, Tosh ?' inquired Penelope, shaking the nuts into a basket Ailsie had brought.

'Na,' said Tosh, snappishly. 'Leastways it's no for *you*. An' noo, I mun be gaun,' getting upon his legs.

'Wi' oot yer bit sup, Tosh ?' said Ailsie, still in the unwontedly gentle tone she had used throughout the interview ; 'there's guid chicken soup for the dinner the nicht, and ye sall hae a basin-full. I'll send for it,' and she rang the bell.

Tosh sat down again. Chicken soup was a temptation against which no call of duty could stand.

'There's time eneugh—time eneugh,' he appeased his conscience, clapping the pocket which held his recovered treasure. 'It can bide a bittie, an I hae na lost it,' and thus comforting himself he appeared satisfied, and Penelope left the room. She was asking herself a terrible inquiry : For whom could that mysterious letter be ? For whom, and from whom ?

Was it wildly improbable that it was from Redwood, and for her cousin Mina ? Could it be the formal proposal which she had taught herself daily to expect, and yet which she only half expected ? Tosh was often at Inverashet, there would be nothing unlawful, nothing disgraceful, in his being used as a messenger, supposing Redwood had no one handy to send.

Tosh was very faithful. Made to understand his errand, he would go through fire and water to accomplish it ; and, of course, there was nothing to prevent Redwood's addressing himself to the young lady personally, all things considered. He might even have spoken to her father already, and received his consent.

'I am certainly a very clever person,' said Penelope to herself, as she mounted one by one the steps to the antechamber wherein Captain Ainslie held his court. 'I divine by instinct. That valuable document over which Tosh rejoiced with such exceeding joy was for Miss Mina Carnoustie, and it was from Mr. Charles Redwood. Bravo, Penelope ! And now to fling these nuts at Bob Ainslie's silly head !' turning the door handle with a jerk, and beginning to chatter like the wind, and to laugh like a thousand mocking birds.

By-and-by she looked round. 'Where is Mina?'

No one knew where Mina was.

'I see her though,' said little Bob the next minute—Bob saw everything and everyone from his window—'there she is, and your friend Tosh with her. He is giving her something—it looks like a letter!' Penelope's heart stood still. 'He is of a generous disposition,' continued Captain Ainslie, laughing. 'Nuts for me, and a *billet-doux* for your cousin. What next? Does he always go about bestowing his favours like this?'

Penelope could not answer.

'A game of picquet, Miss Penelope?'

Penelope sat down to a game of picquet.

---

#### CHAPTER XLIV.

##### THE POSTMARK WAS 'LOCHABER.'

SHE was resolved not to force Mina's confidence. She would not go up to her own room early, not run across her cousin on the staircase or in the galleries.

Already she had been reproved for intermeddling, and now supposing that the climax had been reached, she could well perceive she was no longer needed.

Perhaps she also shrank unconsciously from the moment of disclosure. It would be a moment of triumph; a great moment; one to be hailed with effusion, and reflected upon in after-life with thanksgiving, but—she drew back from it a little.

An hour passed. Mina came into the room. Penelope bit her lip and fixed her eyes steadily upon her own and her antagonist's hands. Bob was doing badly, no amalgamations worked luckily for him; whereas Penelope had never held such cards in her life. 'Point of seven. Quint major. Four aces,' she declared; and Captain Ainslie dashed down his wretched outwitted hand in affected fury and despair.

'I never, 'pon my word, I never knew anything like it!' he exclaimed. 'I am the unluckiest beggar. It matters not how I play, there's no doing anything with such hands as I hold to-night. Well, there's one comfort. You know the old saying?'

Penelope knew the old saying well; strange to say, she was repeating it to herself at the moment, though it could have no meaning for her, of course. She might or might not be 'unlucky

in love' because she was 'lucky at cards,' she would chance the love and stick to the cards. How was Mina looking? What was she doing? Why was she hovering about in the background?

The query was easily answered. Mina was longing to tell her news, of course. She would expect to be kissed, congratulated, and gushed over; there would be a scene like a page out of a silly novel—bah!

Mina came and stood over the picquet players, watching the game.

'You are in the light,' said Penelope, peevishly. She did not lift her head, and frowned and was intent upon her play.

Her cousin moved quietly to one side, and Bob held up his hand of cards to scoff at it, and win a third person's pity and sympathy. Did she ever see such cards? It had been the same every round. Before he saw what he had got, he knew when they were being dealt—knew as well as if he saw them—what the lot would be like! It was always the way at picquet. If one began badly, bad luck pursued one all through. He had not had a decent hand yet.

Mina smiled faintly and put a question. 'Eh? Of course not. That would not work at all,' said Bob, in answer. 'You see if I had had the luck to have a knave of this suit, or a queen of that—'

'What is the use of explaining when she does not know one court card from another?' cried Penelope, rapping the table sharply. 'Do go on, Captain Ainslie. All the talking in the world will not make your hand any better. Mina, I wish you would not stand there. It can't interest you to watch us, when you don't know what we are doing in the least. And I do hate people standing by when I am playing.'

Mina moved away.

'I don't see that *you* need mind, Miss Penelope,' said Bob, jocosely, for he was gratified that she should bestow so much of her attention on the game. Of late he had occasionally felt that when thus engaged her mind was apt to wander. 'Really, you know, I don't say it to be uncivil, but it does not very much signify how you play to-night, you simply can't help scoring. Your cards play themselves. If a whole roomful were buzzing in your ears you would still win every round.'

'There is the dressing gong, and I have been late for dinner every night of late!' Suddenly Penelope dashed down her cards and pushed back her chair. 'Oh, I'm sorry, Captain Ainslie, what do you say?' with a momentary compunction. 'It is "the first

good hand you have held"? Oh, I am sorry—really. Pray don't be vexed with me for being so rude and cross. I am a little out of humour to-night. I don't know why,' nervously collecting the cards and beginning to thrust them back into their case. 'I have no business to be out of humour, and it is not fair to vent it on an invalid either.'

'Don't mention it,' said Bob gaily. 'Don't mention it' was a little joke between him and Penelope. She tried to smile.

'I am afraid my picquet gets to be rather a bore,' continued he. 'I must teach you some other game for a change. That is if my old doctor is still obdurate; but I really think he ought to release you all of my presence soon now. I am an awful nuisance hanging on like this.'

Before she knew what she was saying, Penelope, with truth in every tone of her voice, was giving assurance whereof she was afraid to think presently, but which, had she but known it, rang the death knell to the gay soldier's hopes.

'A nuisance? I cannot tell you what a *blessing* you are to us all. There are things, there are reasons—I cannot explain—it is impossible to enter into it—but sometimes in a family—Captain Ainslie, you have been out in the world and know many things—if it is any consolation to you for being "left upon our hands," as you call it, I don't think I need mind telling you that if there is one thing I am thankful for every day of my life at present it is for *your being here*. I think we are all glad of it—all. I have not heard one of the Carnousties say a single word to the contrary—among themselves, I mean; people talk plainly when they are among themselves, you know—while, as for me, I am grateful to you—do you understand?—*grateful* to you from the bottom of my heart for your presence.'

'Thank you,' said poor Bob, quietly. He knew what this meant. When she held out her hand and kindly assisted him to rise upright, and when he assured her he required no further aid, but would wait a moment before he hobbled along on his crutches to his room—he had been advanced to crutches a few days previously—he made no attempt to renew the conversation. He resolved Penelope should never think of him differently than as she did now.

In two minutes Penelope had forgotten him altogether. Within her own lighted chamber her eyes had caught sight of the expected figure, and with a throb of expectation she already heard in fancy the anticipated announcement.

'Well,' she cried, breathlessly, 'well?'

'I only came in to see if you could give me a thread of silk this shade,' said Mina, holding out a coloured sash ribbon; 'the stitching has come undone, and I know you have a plait of shaded silks. I thought I heard you come upstairs; but it must have been Marie putting out your things.'

Penelope took out the required article.

'How did picquet get on?' said Mina, drawing out the thread she wanted. 'Did Bob do any better after I left?'

'We hardly played any more. I hustled him through the last round. I had an idea that perhaps you—you wanted me.'

'Wanted you, dear?'

'You do not often come and stand over us when we are playing. Are you sure you were not trying to catch my eye? If you have anything to say to me——'

'Indeed I have nothing.'

Penelope's brow changed like a summer day overcast by a thunderstorm. This was too bad, too insulting. Not to tell her? Not even to trust her now that the *dénouement* which she had furthered, and promoted, and toiled for, had actually taken place! In indignation too great for words, she motioned her cousin to the door, and, muttering something about being late and in haste, closed it, almost turning the intruder out.

The evening passed as other evenings had done. No one seemed important or excited, or in any way different from usual. Captain Ainslie was even a little less cheerful than usual; but they said he must be tired; it was his first day of sitting up at the dinner-table; the exertion excused a little lassitude and an early retirement to his room.

Penelope began to wonder if she had not been the victim of some mistake. She recollects that Mina, with her mother's approval and sanction, had one slight hold upon the outer world, which was always made of importance in the family circle. Mina kept up communications with a former governess who was head of a branch of some benevolent society. Applicants desirous of joining this institution had permission to write to Miss Mina Carnoustie; and every now and then a shabby-looking envelope, directed in illiterate handwriting, would come for Mina, sometimes by post, sometimes by messenger.

Might not the letter conveyed by Tosh have been from some island youth or maiden, living at a distance from the castle, and yet imbued by the not unusual idea that a missive delivered by

hand would be more likely to receive attention than one sent through the post?

Then Mina, occupied with other and more engrossing thoughts, had forgotten or did not think it worth while to mention the matter. The writer might have been some one in whom she felt no particular interest.

As this possible interpretation grew upon Penelope, her spirits rose.

When nothing had been said by the next day, and when it was evident that no advance had been made towards an understanding by Redwood and her cousin, she was foolishly happy.

She gave Redwood a spirited account of Tosh and his nuts.

‘You should have seen me hunting for them all over the carpet, and Tosh seated calmly by, holding his Tam o’ Shanter. Then he presents it to me, to convey the delectable offering to Captain Ainslie! Then he suddenly becomes wild with dismay because he has lost somewhere upon his important person an important letter wherewith he had been entrusted. Do you ever entrust your letters to him, Mr. Redwood? Oh, he is much in request as letter-carrier in the neighbourhood, and I really should not wish to throw discredit on him because the letter on this occasion was found inside the inner brim of his “Tammy.” It would be a very safe place if he did not go nutting in the meantime.’

‘Was that where my letter came from?’ said Mina, who was on Redwood’s other side, the three being separated from the rest of the party. ‘I am not sure if I should have received it so readily had I known.’

‘Oh, it was for you, was it?’ Penelope glanced across.

‘From a poor boy I am interested in. He had given it to Tosh for me, as he is some way off. Penelope, don’t mention it till I have told my mother myself. She likes me to tell her everything first hand.’

‘So that was all,’ said Penelope to herself. ‘And yet I don’t like that “Don’t mention it” business beginning again. I am like a burnt child, I suppose. Hi! there is Tosh!’ suddenly. ‘Tosh—hey—Tosh! Oh dear! how grand you are to-day, Tosh! Oh, beautiful! The captain will admire you! He is to go up to see Captain Ainslie, Mr. Redwood; and doesn’t he look nice in his Sunday clothes, and with such a handsome walking-stick too!’

‘Aweel, it’s no that handsome, it’s jist daacent, that’s a,’ protested Tosh, modestly. ‘It’s ane o’ Carnoustie’s, an ye ken he has naethin *handsome* aboot him.’

‘Ha ! ha ! ha ! do you hear that, uncle, do you hear that ?’ Penelope flew after the broad back in front, and repeated what Tosh had said. By this movement she did a double stroke of business—drew her uncle’s attention to his favourite, and detached herself from Redwood’s side. Now that Redwood had not written the mysterious letter, and that he and Mina were still halting and dragging over their courting, she was once more keen to preside over it.

She even set the step of those she joined quicker.

‘Come along—come along, you two,’ she cried, there being only Joanna on her uncle’s other hand. ‘Come along, Joanna ; you can walk fast, I know. Let us get home and see the fun between Captain Ainslie and Tosh. Send him on in front, uncle’—lower—‘to say we are following.’

Penelope knew that Mina could not walk as briskly as her sisters. She would pant, put her hand to her side, and insensibly lag behind, if the pace were beyond her. She would now be forced to retard Redwood’s steps.

With no surprise, therefore, she beheld the distance momentarily increasing between the groups ; and soon the pair behind were to all intents and purposes alone.

Another pair of eyes than Penelope’s marked this also.

Penelope, however, thought she had been adroit in the extreme, when from the antechamber, whither she had accompanied Lord Carnoustie and his protégé, she beheld the two long afterwards coming slowly up the avenue. Redwood had dropped into the way of lunching at the castle on Sundays since Captain Ainslie’s accident, and had therefore been able to escort the young lady to her own door ; and while Tosh was being put through his facings by her uncle, and while she was outwardly paying the necessary tribute to the scene, in reality she was conjecturing what this long *tête-à-tête* might have brought forth.

She was recalled to attention sharply.

‘Well, now you have seen Tosh !’ Lord Carnoustie was saying. ‘Tosh is a great friend of mine, and a very fine fellow ; but I wish you could have seen Torquil—Torquil Macalister—the head shepherd on the home farm. Six feet two in his stocking soles, and the most wonderful line of features ! Painters—whew !—they would have given me anything I liked to ask for him. I was proud to show him off to everyone who came. The ladies used to rave about him. But he left us a very short time before you appeared, and I don’t know where he is now.’

'I ken,' said Tosh, who had been listening attentively. 'Gif ye dinna ken, Carnoustie, *I ken*. Torquil's no that faur ayont, neither.'

'Too far for you or me to get at him, Tosh.' Lord Carnoustie shook his head regretfully. 'I doubt neither of us will ever set eyes on Torquil Macalister again.'

'Me? I set een on him yestreen,' retorted the fool, contemptuously. 'Set e'en, quotha! 'twas mair than that! We had a crack thegither, an he gied me a saxpence—but I'm haverin,' as with a sudden thought. 'Torquil's no carin to hae his freens ken he's aboot, an' I was to haud my tongue.'

'Torquil?' exclaimed Lord Carnoustie, bending his brows upon the speaker. 'Are you thinking what you are saying, Tosh? Torquil here? And not come to see me? And not care for me to know he's on the place? I—I should take it very ill of Torquil—but I can't think it's true,' he broke off doubtfully. 'I think you forget a wee bit, Tosh. Wasna that some wee whiley ago ye were seein Torquil an' crackin wi' him?' persuasively. 'Afore he left us? A good few Sabbaths ago, maybe four or five; was na that it, Tosh?'

'Mebbe,' said Tosh, sullenly.

'I thought so.' Lord Carnoustie's brow cleared. 'Time passes quietly here, and he is not very good at counting the weeks,' to Captain Ainslie. 'If Torquil Macalister had come back to the island, I know I should not be the last person to hear of it. A good-hearted, grateful fellow, and the best servant ever man had. He would have come to see me before anybody.'

'Humph!' said Tosh.

'Well, Tosh, you have seen the captain, and now I think you had better be going,' proceeded his patron, kindly. 'Duncan, to the footman who entered at the moment, 'take him along to the kitchen, and see he gets something to eat. Is that dinner, Duncan? I'll be down directly; and, Ainslie, are you coming in to the dining-room? That's right, you are getting on fast now. We shall have you about in no time,' and he stumped away.

Meantime Penelope had turned round a scared and whitened face upon Bob, and as she moved past him he uttered an exclamation of concern.

She silenced it by a wave of her hand. . . .

The next day she went down to Glenmore, and by good fortune found the factor at home as well as his sisters.

'Don't you think Tosh is growing a little more silly than he used to be?' she observed carelessly in the course of conversation. 'When I first came here, about four months ago, I used to have long talks with him, and he often conversed quite sensibly about things within his reach. But now he seems to have illusions. What do you think he said yesterday to Lord Carnoustie and Captain Ainslie? He protested, and stuck to it, that he had seen Torquil Macalister, the shepherd that used to be here, the day before, and that Torquil was in a sort of manner in hiding; at least, Tosh inferred as much; and at first my uncle was quite put out; but when he thought it over, he came to the conclusion that Tosh was talking nonsense, not wilfully, but that he was wandering in his mind.'

'Tosh was right enough for all that,' said the factor. 'I saw Torquil Macalister myself this morning, away on the other side of the glen, close by Inverashet House. I said to my man Angus, "Is not that Torquil?" and Angus said he had heard Torquil had been seen here and there this week past. I called to him, but he took no notice. Like enough he feels he used us shabbily, bolting off as he did at our busiest time; and I always had it in my mind that it was a flam that story of his about a dying father, whereas the plain truth was he had had the offer of a better place. He was never over well content with his situation as shepherd, whatever face he put upon it. Between ourselves, Miss Penelope, he was a wee thing spoilt by his fine looks and everybody's saying he was such a gentleman. Maybe he hoped to start as a gentleman—as a gentleman keeper I mean—when he went from here; he was fitter for a keeper than for a shepherd, I aye thought; and maybe the place, when he got it, did not just turn out as well as he expected, or he couldn't keep it, or something, and he's back to see what his friends will do for him here. He may be after a place with the duke—there are a wheen men gone from the duke's of late; but anyhow Tosh's eyesight was clear enough, it was Torquil Macalister in the flesh he saw, as it's myself can testify.'

Soon after Penelope took leave; she was going on to the village, to the post-office. She had no foreign stamps left, and there might be some bungle made about her Jamaica letter, if she did not herself have it accurately stamped.

A weight of vague apprehension had fallen on her spirits. Every day seemed to bring something new, yet nothing definite; she was sick and weary of it all. Torquil Macalister again about? Mina again mysterious and perplexing? The secret letter, could

it be from Torquil? Or was it only by a coincidence that he should be on the island when her cousin was being applied to in regard to the benevolent institution?

It was quite possible that Mina knew nothing of Torquil's return. She had exerted herself more than usual in Redwood's presence during the last few days; Redwood had been at the castle constantly; that the names of the two were being coupled together, Penelope shrewdly guessed, and moreover that the topic was in everybody's mouth.

'It is very wrong of that man to have come back at all, and very tiresome that he should have chosen this time of all others,' reflected Penelope; 'but I dare say he will be careful not to come near us. As Mr. Soutter says, he may want to be employed by the duke, and if he keeps away at the other end of the island, he may consider he is holding to his word. These sort of people have their own ideas. At any rate, I am too tired and disheartened to do anything. I dare say all will go right if it is let alone,' and she attended to her postage, and left the little shop after despatching her letter.

'Hey—stop—hey,' the post-mistress's younger sister ran after the young lady. 'Wad ye be so guid,' she panted, coming up alongside, 'as tell Miss Meena there's been a letter waitin' for her here this week past? She kens aboot it. She said there wad be nae mair, and she's no been doun-bye since. But it's here, and we was feared to send it up, as we had been bidden no.'

Penelope stood still.

'Will you please tell me all that over again?' she said in her clear, pleasant voice. 'I should like to be very particular about the exact words of your message.'

The girl repeated as nearly as possible her request.

'Miss Mina used to come down for letters?'

'For ane. No for ither. Ilka Monday i' the forenoon. She never missed.'

'Till when?'

'She didna come—stop—the Monday 'fore last she had her letter; an' the end o' the week it might be, she said there wad be nae mair; but it cam', an' we hae na kenned what to dae wi' t.'

'You were not allowed to put it in the letter-bag?'

'Na.'

'Did Miss Mina say why?'

‘Oo, aye ; thae letters aye bit to be answered by the neist post oot. An’ it saved time if she jist steppit doon, and had them and answered them i’ the shop. It was business ; and it’s a twa days’ post to Lochaber.’

‘To Lochaber !’ Penelope sickened. ‘To Lochaber !’ she repeated. Torquil Macalister was a Lochaber man.

‘The postmark was “Lochaber,”’ explained the girl, apologetically. ‘We aye kenned it was Miss Meena’s letter when it cam frae Lochaber ; for she had bidden us tak’ heed o’t oorsels. She said we was to gie her “Lochaber” letter to naebody but hersel.’

‘Very well,’ said Penelope, quietly. ‘I will give her your message.’

‘Faithless, treacherous girl !’ She turned away, wringing her hands beneath her plaid. ‘False to her word—false to me—to Redwood—to everyone ! From beginning to end she has been hoodwinking us all ! It must have been going on from the very first. I remember how soon her cheerfulness returned ! How quickly she seemed consoled ! How aptly she fell in with every suggestion I made ! It was easy to say “Yes” to everything, while *this* was going on ! Oh ! now I well believe who employed poor Tosh on Saturday ; the same person whose last letter lies at this moment in Jess McFadyan’s keeping ; the same whose postmark was ever to be “Lochaber.” Ha ! Who is that ?’ She started, and with difficulty suppressed a scream.

There was a low wall on one side of the road which led from the village to the castle ; and something moved behind the wall. The next minute a face looked over it.

‘One of the watchers setting his rabbit traps,’ said Penelope to herself. But she quickened her pace, and looking the other way, drew a breath of relief as she passed the spot. The watcher, if it were one, remained perfectly still, and had probably again crouched over his traps. The days were beginning to draw in, and the dusk was not far off, though it was but five o’clock.

It was a mild autumnal evening, perfectly still but for the splashing of the high tide, which washed the rocky shore almost at Penelope’s feet, as she hastened along. Years afterwards she recalled the measured sound of the waves, and the sight of a large black cormorant, which, settled upon an oily herring streak, was fishing and gobbling almost upon their edge. She turned her head to watch the bird for a moment ; he was a fine fellow, and enjoying himself famously. Willing to divert her thoughts, and

being now within a hundred yards of the lodge, she might halt and watch the pretty sight—nay, she would fetch her uncle down to see the cormorant. It would be an excuse for not going into the house—for not seeing Mina.

Would Lord Carnoustie be at home? If not, he might be on the road behind her, it being that which led to his distant shooting-ground—and she turned to look. Two figures were approaching. A second glance enabled her to perceive whose they were.

A flush of indignation burned in Penelope's cheek. ' Still carrying on the farce?' muttered she. ' Befooling this honest-hearted man, only to cheat him worse than he has been cheated before! Ah, he is in a worse plight now than he was then. Oh, Mina, Mina! you wicked, base, treacherous—*What's that?*' A fresh alarm: a new spasm of apprehension! She shook with terror, her limbs trembled beneath her. For what did her starting eyes perceive?

The stealthy figure behind the wall creeping forward with a soft, gliding, snake-like motion; and again a man's face peering over the mossy summit, as from a lurking-place.

' Who is that? ' gasped Penelope, her heart thundering. ' What does that man want? What is he doing there? ' The face was turned from her, half hidden by a slouching cap; but the form of the head—the breadth of shoulder—it could be none other than '*Torquil!*' The scream died in her throat. '*Torquil!* Oh, my God, it is *Torquil!*... Oh, God,... help them! It is *Torquil* who lies in wait!... O God!—Oh, help!—They are coming—they are coming!—and there is murder in his face!... She tried to shriek, to call aloud, but not a syllable would come, and yet nearer and nearer sounded the gay voices, as Redwood and Mina with one accord loudly hailed her, shouting to make their presence known, as they perceived her attention fixed upon another quarter. The next moment she had flown across the road—ah!... a blinding flash before her eyes! An echoing report! A cloud of blue, hanging smoke! Through the horror of it all she could see her cousin, her cousin Mina stagger, reel, and fall heavily fall to the ground.

The next moment an unseen hand knocked up the muzzle of the murderer's rifle, and his second bullet flew wide above Redwood's head.

With an oath Torquil Macalister sprang from his retreat, and before Redwood, who had rushed forward, could scale the barrier between the two had dashed across the broken moorland in

the rear, and was lost to view in the gathering shadow of the mountain.

On the roadside lay Mina Carnoustie, her life-blood ebbing fast away.

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### CHAPTER XLV.

'THEY WILL FIND TORQUIL MACALISTER THERE TO-MORROW.'

'Is she dead?' whispered Penelope.

She had staggered to the spot where Redwood knelt beside her cousin, and both felt as though the question scarcely needed a reply.

Mina, however, made a movement, sighed, and unclosed her eyes.

'Oh!' cried Penelope, joyously. But Redwood turned his head, and checked her with a look. 'Fly to the castle,' said he, with hoarse imperative urgency. 'Fly. There is not a moment to lose. I will do what I can till you return, but we must have help quickly—*quickly*—or—Heavens! is she gone?' She had sunk down again, seemingly inanimate.

Penelope clasped her hands, and both hung in breathless suspense for the next few moments.

There was another sign of life; Redwood looked up and nodded; Penelope understood, and as swiftly as her trembling limbs could bear her, sped along the level road, and turning in at the castle gates, was almost instantly lost to view.

'She will hardly last till they come,' said Redwood to himself. 'What can be the meaning of it? If only I could have gone after the villain—'

'Mr. Redwood,' said a voice in his ear. It was that of the dying girl, who had again opened her eyes, fixed them upon him, and was struggling for speech, obviously with all the powers still left her. Could there be any hope of life? But the blood was pouring from a wound whose extent he could not calculate, and he feared the worst. He laid his hand across her mouth. 'Do not speak. Save yourself. Help will soon be here.'

'Too late for me,' said Mina, faintly. 'It is no matter. *He* has killed me; but it was not cruel of him, as you think. He only did it because we loved each other so; he could not bear to see

me with you. Tell him I forgive him. Tell him, *Torquil*—that though he killed me, I—forgive him—'

'The scoundrel!' exclaimed Redwood, scarcely believing his senses. 'There is some hideous mistake. He has confused you with some other person?'

A flickering smile just showed on her panting lips.

'Mistake? *Torquil* mistake *me*!' Suddenly the mind, resolved upon freeing itself, surmounted the gathering torpor of the physical frame, and, with an energy of which the moment before she had seemed incapable, Mina Carnoustie proceeded. 'Mr. Redwood, I must speak. Hold up my head!—Hold it higher!—There! I can see you now. I shall not be able to see you in a few minutes. Are you listening? Listen, and don't forget, *don't forget*,' with broken intensity of emphasis, 'what I say. *Torquil* Macalister loved me, and I loved him, and there was no hope. *Penelope*—she—' breath was rapidly failing. He had to wait till she had acquired another effort. Then he gently put the thread into her hands again.

'*Penelope*?' he suggested.

'She knew; she found out. It was that day after the water party. She was very angry—very, *very* angry. . . . She made *Torquil* go away. . . . And she said—she said . . . again the voice died out.

'What did she say?' besought he, straining every nerve to hear.

'She said that if you and I—that if I would accept you as a lover—it would save me.'

'She said so? *Penelope*?' He bit his lip, which twitched cruelly.

'It was her plan to save me. She meant to be kind . . . She did not understand. . . .'

'And she wished you to marry me?' said Redwood, with a cold knife at his heart. 'Oh, yes, I have no doubt she meant to be kind—to you,' bitterly.

A gleam of intelligence lighted up the dying girl's eyes. 'It *was* kind,' she said, 'because,' on a sudden she reared herself almost upright, and gripped him by the arm with vice-like fingers, 'because *Penelope* *loves you herself*. She does. She does.' Again the last syllables faded into an inarticulate murmur.

Redwood, who had uttered a startled exclamation, remained now absolutely petrified from amazement.

‘I am dying. Won’t you believe me?’ whispered poor Mina. ‘I shall be dead in a few minutes. Would I lie to you now? I have not been a truthful girl; I did pretend to—to—do what Penelope asked me, and I did deceive her and you, and everybody. But I am going now—going—going. . . . Dear Penelope—she—’

‘But is this true? Can it be *true*? ’ demanded Redwood, passing his hand over his brow. ‘Forgive me, for I ought not to encourage you to speak. No, you must not speak: never mind what you had to say: it is no matter—’

She made an imploring gesture. ‘It is the truth—what I said—do you believe me? Oh, you must—you must believe me.’ Again his arm was passionately held, the while she struggled for breath.

‘I *will* believe you. Only be silent. Only keep still, and wait till others come.’

‘Others? I shall not see them. Kiss Penelope from me. And remember—remember—’ but he could not learn what it was he was to remember.

‘My parents, my sisters,’ suddenly exclaimed Mina—‘Ah! how dark it is! Who is here? Who?’ Voices and steps were heard approaching.

‘Thank God! they are come at last,’ cried Redwood, ‘but—’ his lips fell apart.

There was a tremor of the form he held, and an ashen shade fell over the face. The glazed orbs opened once widely, convulsively; there was no light nor consciousness within them; gradually the eyelids sank, and as the foremost runner fell on her knees beside the spot, the spirit of Mina Carnoustie passed away from earth.

Who can depict the awful moments which now followed? Every few seconds brought fresh arrivals to the darkened roadside, where a dimly outlined group still endeavoured vainly to restore animation to the lifeless form.

‘I fear, my lord, I fear there is no use attempting more;’ a hand was at length laid upon the shoulder of the distracted father. ‘We have tried everything,’ said John Soutter, mournfully. ‘My lord, I fear—’

But Lord Carnoustie shook him off. ‘Everything? It’s easy to say “everything.” Can’t you think of *anything*, some of ye?’ cried he, glaring round. ‘A useless, jabbering pack! ’ as his ear caught a few broken murmurs. ‘She *can’t* be dead—it’s—it’s

nonsense, I tell you !' in a high key. ' You'll let her die, that's what you'll do among ye, standing gaping there ! Here, Redwood, you have some sense, don't let her slip away while these fools are looking on open-mouthed. Get away with ye all, if ye're no good,' stamping his foot at the cowering circle. ' Redwood ?—Penelope— ?'

' His lordship wishes you to convey the——' Redwood, who had begun calmly, here lost his voice. He indicated, however, the motionless form on which every eye was bent. ' To the castle,' he subjoined, hurriedly. Then he took Lord Carnoustie's arm, and without a word led him forward.

' Ay, to the castle ; of course, to the castle. These dolts would have let her lie there all night ! Ye hear what he says ? Obey him then, can't ye ?' scowling round. Then turning again to Redwood, ' That was a good thought of yours, Redwood. The doctor will be at the castle ; he'll know what to do. My poor wife ! Redwood, I—I can't think. Mina is her darling—but we'll bring her round—we'll bring her round. The doctor will bring her round in no time—McWhinnoch is a clever fellow. How was it, Redwood ? They told me, but I forget. Your gun went off——'

' Not mine,' said Redwood, hastily.

' A gun. Some nasty, poaching rascal, without so much as a licence even, you may take your oath. I'll have him prosecuted. He has nearly killed my daughter—*my* daughter. I—I can't think of it yet. It was an awful sight—her poor mother——'

' I trust Lady Carnoustie will not meet us,' said Redwood, rapidly considering. ' If she could be got out of the way——' he looked over his shoulder.

' Send Penelope on in front. Here, I'll send her,' and the old man stood still, and turned round. But when he attempted to call Penelope's name his dry throat refused its office.

What he beheld was indeed a spectacle to paralyse the tongue of any parent.

Beneath the ancestral trees which formed a canopy overhead, there wound, with measured tread, the silent *cortège*, every head uncovered, every face bent upon the ground. It might have been—he felt it was—a funeral procession.

' Good God ! do they think she is *dead* ?' As though it were a new and unexpected thought, Lord Carnoustie gave vent to the passionate ejaculation, and brought his startled eyes back to Redwood's face. ' *Dead* ?' he whispered.

Redwood bowed his head.

The old man fell against him: would have fallen over had he not been upheld.

But the next moment Redwood was again vehemently urged forward.

‘Quick—haste—come on—come on. Get there before them, Redwood. For God’s sake, get there before them—my poor wife!—my poor wife! Whatever happens, Redwood, keep it from my poor wife. Let us get in, and find her.’

It was clear that with him the worst was now past. After accompanying him to the hall door and seeing him disappear upon his merciful errand, Redwood could hold himself in readiness to render assistance to others who might require it.

‘Let the young ladies go by,’ whispered the factor, taking him by the coat, as the weeping Joanna, accompanied by Penelope, emerged from the rest; ‘let them win in, poor things. Miss Louisa’s with her mother. Then we can see what to do.’

He held a hurried consultation with the household, and returned to Redwood.

‘They say it will be best to take her to her own apartment. To lay her down anywhere else might show too plainly—if we can keep up the idea that there’s *hope*, if it’s but for an hour, till the family can get over the first shock, d’ye see, Mr. Redwood?’

‘Is there anything I can do?’ said Redwood, abruptly.

‘Surely. You can go and tell Captain Ainslie, and keep him quiet. Or—but maybe you wouldn’t like to do that?’

‘I should like to do anything. Make me of any use. As for Ainslie, doubtless he knows already, and his own feelings will prompt him to remain out of sight. What can I do for you?’

‘There’s the Fiscal,’ whispered Mr. Soutter, in his ear. ‘There must be an inquest, and—and you could best lay before him the information, since you were present. It’s murder, Mr. Redwood, as I understand it—murder; and the murderer has escaped! We shall have other things to think of than just this poor bairn’s funeral—wae’s me, that such a thing should be! But if we could leave the house to themselves,’ and he looked round.

Obviously his attention was being waited for, and several now pressed forward with whispered questions and suggestions. He stepped aside: the group moved forward and passed up the broad staircase, and he returned to Redwood. ‘Dr. McWhinnoch can’t be got. He’s at the other side of the island to-day. If I could have left him here—but it’s plain I must stay myself now. So,

Mr. Redwood, I will make bold to put this matter in your hands. There's my dog-cart at the door.'

'Certainly. I will go at once.'

'Lay the information before the Fiscal—that's Mr. William Turnbull. My man Angus,' walking with Redwood to the door, 'here he is, he knows where Mr. Turnbull lives. Carnoustie himself is a J.P., but then, where's the good of him now?' mournfully. 'Angus will take you to Mr. Turnbull's house, and he—or his clerk, if he is not at home—will take the necessary steps. Was it—was it really Torquil Macalister who fired the shot, Mr. Redwood?' suddenly stepping close to Redwood's side, and dropping his voice so as to be overheard by no one.

'Beyond a doubt. I saw the man distinctly.'

'A case of mistaken identity, I suppose,' said Mr. Soutter, looking him steadily in the face. 'Or else Torquil has suddenly become insane. At any rate he must be secured. It is hopeless to think of catching him to-night,' looking out at the darkened sky. 'That is to say, if he sticks to the hills. No one could find him there, if he chose to hide. He knows every crag and corrie, every nook and rocky shelter—and I wouldn't be the man to approach him forbye, if he has his gun—'

'He had: he waved it as he sprang up the moor.'

'And bullets in plenty about him, I'll warrant. He'll be best approached cannily. We must inveigle him down by stratagem, or maybe he'll give himself up, if he's mad—really mad. And of course he's mad, Mr. Redwood—and so I told Miss Penelope. It was she who screamed out Torquil's name—but that's no matter—no matter. You tell Mr. Turnbull how it happened, and beg him to come over soon, as soon as possible; meantime I'll wait with the family. Good-bye, Mr. Redwood. The Lord speed you! It's an awful thing—an awful, fearful thing. If you should just happen to see my sisters in the bye-gaun, Mr. Redwood?'

'I will, certainly. On my return I will stop at Glenmore. After which, Mr. Soutter, unless you should happen to want me, there seems to be no occasion for my returning here. I should not see any of the family again to-night. Perhaps you would kindly despatch a messenger to Inverashet to let my servants know to send to Glenmore for me in an hour's time? I will leave your dog-cart there, and get into my own.' He then departed.

A few hours later and all was silence in the mourning house.

Busy steps and hurried consultations had ceased. Doors no longer opened and shut; a hush had fallen even upon weeping

and wailing, and whoever kept vigil, kept it in solitude and apart.

Of this number was Penelope: what deeper meaning the fatal tragedy of the afternoon had for her than for others was known, she believed, to herself alone, and the relief of sharing her agony with anyone was denied her. In vain she sought in the countenance of one and another, to whom she was called upon to narrate what she had witnessed, indications of any suspicion of the truth. All were lost in simple bewilderment, and the alternating explanations suggested by Mr. Souter were accepted without demur.

But could this ignorance be sustained? It could and it must. She would die before she disclosed her own terrible knowledge: and who or what else could betray? All at once the watcher started to her feet.

She was within her own turret chamber, and it was next to the chamber of death. It had not been suggested that she should change to another room, and she had not cared to trouble anyone with the proposal at such a time. It mattered little, she told herself; but now—now in the light of a new thought, it mattered much, and mattered on the right side. Something had recurred to her recollection which made her regard the near neighbourhood of that white veiled apartment as of strange value.

'I must do it—I must!' she cried. For she now knew—it seemed as if on a sudden she knew everything—why Mina had so persistently kept locked a certain tiny cabinet which Penelope had often admired, a quaintly fashioned piece of furniture, with a carved front, and coarse, strong lock. 'They are in there, they are, they must be!' she panted. 'Those "Lochaber" letters, and—and who knows what besides? I must get them, and destroy them. If they are found—oh, my poor Mina, even your father's and your mother's tears for you would be dried, and they would almost thank God for your death that saved their pride disgrace.'

She paused a minute and pondered.

'That was the key which was taken from her neck, and laid upon the dressing-table. It is under the white cloth. I know the place. If I can but get the key and open the cabinet, or carry off the cabinet—but no, it would be missed, and to-morrow the key might be gone—to-night is my only chance. What excuse can I make to steal in? Ailsie is there—poor, poor Ailsie! She knows, but she thinks I do not know, and I—it is no time to

talk with her now if I ever do. Driven to the worst, I might be forced, but I will try something else first. . . . Yes, that will do. It is true I have eaten nothing, and Ailsie could not refuse. . . . Bracing herself for the effort, she turned the handle of the door and glided within.

Ailsie sat by the fire, an old, old woman, bent double.

Penelope went up and whispered to her.

'My puir bairn, yes,' said the faithful creature, rising immediately. 'I'll see t'ye. I can get ye something hot i' my ain room; only for leavin' this,' and she paused with momentary irresolution.

'I will stay here, I am not afraid,' said Penelope, breathing fast. Instinctively her eye went over to the cabinet, distinctly outlined, but now veiled like the rest, and she experienced an involuntary sensation of relief at finding it in its usual place by the fireside, not near the bed—'if you would be so kind, dear Ailsie ?'

In another minute she had snatched the key from the toilet-table, unpinned the napkin which dropped from the glossy wood of the cabinet, opened it, and withdrawn its contents, consisting of letters forming a small packet, a few bunches of withered flowers, and the silver brooch which had been lost on the moor and brought back by the idiot Tosh.

Slipping these into her pocket, and peering anxiously into every corner, she could discern nothing more, and with a sigh of satisfaction turned the lock again, and replaced the key where it had been before.

All was done so quickly that the old nurse had scarcely descended the turret staircase ere Penelope's mission was accomplished.

She now wished she had thought of some slighter errand on which to despatch her messenger. Would Ailsie be long? Must she wait where she was? Could she not step back into her own room and wait there till she heard steps returning, when she could flit across and regain poor Mina's bedchamber before Ailsie knew?

Yet no; she had promised she would stay, and such a promise must be sacredly kept. She turned to the window, and softly drew up the blind to let in the silver moonlight. Not a cloud dimmed the brilliancy of the firmament, and far and wide the landscape could be seen clear and ghostly.

'I wonder where he is now?' Penelope's thoughts reverted with a shudder to the murderer at large upon the heights. 'It

was there I saw him first,' gazing; 'on that heathery knoll poor Mina pointed him out to me; and on that same spot she lost his brooch afterwards. It must have been a marked place with them —a trysting place—a—' Suddenly her eyeballs started from their sockets, and her arms flew up above her head.

Upon the moor, upon the very point on which her gaze was bent, there flashed out a bright blue flame, a lightning stroke—a what? The same instant a faint unmistakable report fell upon her ear, in the hush of night.

'He was right to choose that place,' muttered Penelope, white to the lips. 'They will find Torquil Macalister there to-morrow.'

*(To be continued.)*

## *White Sea Letters, 1893.*

BY AUBYN TREVOR-BATTYE, B.A., F.L.S., &c.

### LETTER III.

#### ARCHANGEL AND THE GREAT RIVERS.

THE White Sea is the basin of many waters. Into it from every side the rivers run. From north-east to west—as that large stream which ends in an estuary, filled with rocks and dangerous banks, at Mezen, whence in spring the men skirt round the Kanin Nos after the walrus and the seal. From west to east—as the beautiful river Kem, which separates Karelia from Pomoria on the Torski coast, and enters a fjord of the White Sea where lies the town that bears its name. The men of Kem are mostly Russians. The true Karelians inhabit chiefly the inland villages. They live a hard and varied life. Partly they are farmers, with many reindeer, and tilling in a scratchy way where chance offers; partly they are fishermen, owning hundreds of large nets and taking vast quantities of salmon; hunters are they also, killing for fur and food the bear and deer, and for fur alone the wolf and fox. Also they travel immense distances in lodkas, or boats of the most crank description, to hunt the walrus, even as far as Novaya Zembla itself. You can pretty generally tell a Karelian wherever you may come across him, for his is not a Russian type. They say, and no doubt with truth, that they are Finns. The last river I shall mention is the Dwina. Now every river I have seen in the White Sea has been of a totally distinct character. And so I have given you three types. The Mezen, coming over the granite plains that underlie the tundras; the Kem, which drains the overflow of Lake Kuittö-järvi, hurrying clear and brown over its beds of mountain limestone, in rapid and race and waterfall, a magnificent and ideal salmon river (where I mean to fish when I come down from Kolgouev next year), filled also with

splendid trout ; and now the Dwina. You will want to know most about that, because its name is so familiar. If you look at a good map you will see, in the Province of Vologda, the town of Great Ustyng. At this point two rivers, the Sukhona and the Yuga, run together, and the stream so formed is the Dwina. This river now runs north and west. It is extraordinarily varied in character. For example, at a point about sixty-three miles above Archangel it widens out into a number of small streams, which cover altogether an area of some eleven and a half miles, and vary in depth from five to eight feet. But just south of Archangel all these streams have joined again. The resulting river is half a mile wide, and from twenty to forty feet in depth ; and so flows down to the Archangel delta, where again it branches, and enters the White Sea by many mouths of muddy water.

Archangel itself is set in about twenty-five miles from the head of the gulf, at the apex of the delta. These river branches inclose many islands, low-lying and sandy, covered at the height of thirty-four feet with spruce and pine ; elsewhere with willows, brush, and grass. Three principal channels are available for boats, and vary in depth from ten to fifty feet. By far the greatest commercial resource of Archangel is timber, and you can form some idea of what a tedious work the floating of the timber down the rivers is when I tell you that the larch brought from Mezen takes two seasons doing its 1,666 miles of river.

The geography book, as you remember, used to tell us that 'Archangel was founded by Peter the Great, who established there the first beginnings of the Russian Navy.' There is still evidence of this. On the banks of one of the islands stands an old stone fort of his, called Novo Dwina. It is square, and flanked with towers. Also there is an old house in Archangel which has been moved from Markhoff Island. In this also Peter the Great used to live while he was watching the building of his ships, and they say it was made by his own hands.

Archangel has had its ups and downs. In reality it was created and maintained by English adventurers in Tudor days—men who were trying to find a north-east way to the Indies. Then comes in Peter the Great, who, *faute de mieux*, made the best of an imperfect port. Then Napoleon closed all Russian ports against England except Archangel ; and as a consequence of this the English flocked thither, and for a time its trade was enormous. Those were the great days of Archangel, and evidence of them is everywhere to be traced even in her present decay, as

I shall show you presently. For Archangel does comparatively little now—her trade has gone to the Baltic.

The population of Archangel is close on 20,000, including the island of Solombol, which is the commercial, and in some respects the most interesting quarter; for here you see some small survival of that activity which Peter the Great called into being. Here 'Captain's Russian' and a few English stock words are bandied about all day. You know what 'Captain's Russian' is? Well, it means this (and you may see an interesting reference to it in Darwin's *Beagle Voyage*, though I can't give you the exact instance now). All over the world, wherever the English go, there obtains among seafaring men a sort of mongrel, intermediate lingo, which serves its purpose well enough. Now, every language has some one predominating characteristic which strikes a foreigner more than another, so that it seems to him to be the essential element of that tongue. For example, to the Russian it seems that 'all English words end in *um*,' and therefore their English takes this form, e.g. 'Tellum clockum' means 'Tell me the time.' And, what is worse, in order to make their own language, as they think, intelligible to an Englishman they must change it in the same way, e.g. 'Niet dabro,' 'No good,' becomes 'Nietum dobrum,' and so on. That is 'Captain's Russian.'

Archangel cannot be called a beautiful town. There is not a house in it of any architectural merit, scarcely one of any architectural pretension. Of public buildings the cathedral is a semi-Byzantine structure, crowned with cupolas in green and gold. They say it was built with money derived from Swedish vessels captured on the seas. The fire tower of the police station is a high stone structure, with a gallery near its top. Here the whole year through is posted the sentry who watches over the safety of the town. At the first sign of fire he touches one of the wires that radiate from his tower and signals the fire station of the different quarters below. For Archangel is a wooden town. Houses, footways, even the road itself sometimes, and the embankment of the river in some places, are all of wood. Out in the country you may find the road for several kilometres laid down in sawdust. Along the island of Solombol, at the saw-mills, lie ships from England and Scotland taking in their freight of timber.

The bridge that connects Solombol with Archangel is entirely built of wood. This bridge, which is I think about a thousand yards long, is taken to pieces and entirely removed every autumn, or it would be carried away by the ice in the spring. For by the

end of October the river is covered with ice. But this ice, thin at first, is broken up by the current and by the tide until in about three weeks' time all the head of the gulf is heaped up with hummocky ice for a distance of thirteen miles out. Soon the river ice is two and a half feet thick and remains a highway for traffic till well into the spring. Now, when one remembers the great variations in the form of the river higher up, and reflects upon the enormous area of land which it drains, one can easily understand that the breaking-up of the ice is a very serious matter. And it is rendered more so by the fact that the upper waters of the Dwina open first. Here, about the end of April, the ice breaks up. And the stream goes tearing down with its burden of ice floes, piling them up against the solid barrier below, and pressing them down against the bed of the stream. Of course an inundation follows; one that often continues till the middle of June. Ice and water go sailing out into the land about and working fearful havoc. It is on record that in 1811 the river rose twenty feet and carried away vessels till it dropped them down among the forest trees of the islands. So, against this contingency extraordinary measures have to be taken. Houses lying near the river are defended with a breastwork of piles; and, wherever the land is low, piles are driven in in all directions with a view to arresting the passage of the floes. The houses by the river are approached by a sloping ladder surmounted by a platform called the 'povjet.' Up this ladder, or gangway, the cattle and horses are driven, and are then housed in an upper storey. But with all these precautions houses are continually being lost, and it is no uncommon sight to see the remains of some that have lately sunk, and others undermined and ready to follow.

Archangel, taken as a whole, is an ugly and not an interesting town, though it has of course its picturesque points—the market-place, for example. Here the annual open-air fair is being held. This fair begins about the middle of September, and runs on into the winter. A wonderful jumble of things is then on view; stalls devoted to the sale of ikons (the curious half-metal, half-painted representations of the Madonna or a Saint), crosses, and sacred charms; others containing wonderful collections of old iron (much prized by the Samoyeds); clothing stalls piled up with fur hoods, slippers, caftans, sheepskin coats and long boots; pottery of a rough but not ungraceful character, and so on. In the winter the Samoyeds come in, and the scene is varied by strings of reindeer and wolfish-looking dogs.

You will want me, before I stop, to tell you what impression I have formed of the Russians themselves. But it would be obviously absurd to judge the Russian by the Russian of Archangel. Here all, or nearly all, is mercantile and uncultivated. You will appreciate this when I tell you that in this city of close upon 20,000 inhabitants there is not a single book to be bought, nor any newspaper published or obtainable, unless you distinguish as a newspaper a single sheet of current prices and of business transactions circulated among the merchants. All your news you must obtain from St. Petersburg—something like eight hundred versts away. Here in Archangel the men are not handsome nor the women pretty. A girl of fifteen is a grown-up woman, and before she is five-and-twenty she looks old and has lost any good looks she may have possessed. The women work exceedingly hard at every kind of manual labour; the men do some work also, but chiefly they slouch about and drink vodka. When the ships are in here, loading corn, that work is done by girls of twelve years old and upwards. This corn-loading is terrible work. The girls are down in the hold, where there is not a ray of light; nothing but darkness and choking corn-dust. Occasionally they come up to get some air, bleeding not infrequently at nose and ears, in spite of the wet handkerchief worn across the face. For forty-eight hours they will continue this labour without sleep. Their pay is 25 kopecks a day (about  $6\frac{1}{2}d.$ ), of which they give 5 kopecks to the stevedore in whose employ they are. And the men look on, and nobody minds, for it has always been the same.

The women are fairly quick and intelligent, but the men strike one as being just the reverse. Vodka is the ruin of the men. Behind the Consul's house we found a policeman lying, unable to move. We stirred him up a little, when he protested he was very sorry. That was all. A penalty against intemperance on the part of officials and servants either does not exist, or is but little enforced. For example, round in the town all night a watch is kept by old watchmen, who make a noise as they go along on a sort of rattle, called a *karaoulsk*. The authorities tell them, 'When you cannot go because of vodka, then your wife must go.' So that very often, especially in Solombol, you find the old woman serving her husband's turn. At certain corners are posted officials, to whom the watchers must deliver a little metal plate every half an hour, to show that they are at their duty. Should they

fall asleep and fail to hand over the token-plate, they go to prison for six weeks.

Nothing could be kinder than the attitude of everyone towards myself, from the Governor downwards. The old Governor, Prince Galitzin, who had been here for many many years, and owed a universal popularity to his urbane disposition and to a charming wife, has lately left, and has been succeeded by a new man, whom I was led to believe I should find a very different stamp of man—a curt official who would probably refuse to help me, and snub me for my pains. (You know it was from him I hoped to get credentials for my Arctic voyage next year; in short, that was almost my sole reason for coming out.) Well, I was a little alarmed at first, for the Governor cannot speak English, and opened proceedings by sending his secretary or aide-de-camp, who can speak it, out of the room. However, we got along well enough in French. I can only say this, that nothing could possibly be kinder than his reception. He took the liveliest interest in my plans, fetching down charts and maps, and entering thoroughly into everything. He most kindly offered to send me on his gunboat, but of course if I succeed in getting to Kolgouev at all I shall be there before the White Sea is open. The upshot of it is that the Governor has sent me papers of the greatest value, and promised to do anything more he can. (You understand that the benefit of this interest will come in if I should have any friction with the little Russian traders, or should find myself on the Siberian mainland by any mischance.)<sup>1</sup>

I find the merchants, too, most hospitable and kind. The leading merchant gave me a dinner the other evening, and most kindly invited all his English-speaking friends. The dinner was excellent, full of surprises and curious dishes. They do not have their wine in decanters here, but in the original bottles. After we had got through quite a big list of wines, including champagne, 'Now,' he said, 'we are really English. This is what you will like.' And straightway appeared a veritable bottle of Bass, which out here is considered a luxury superior to champagne. We got through the Bass somehow, and no one seemed to lose consciousness.

Archangel is of course far outside the world of politics. It stands alone—its own little economy, its old untouched traditions, its prison where exiles wait transportation to Siberia. It was in

<sup>1</sup> I called with Mr. Henry Arthur Cooke, our Vice-Consul, who was most kind. As I attribute my success entirely to him, the least I can do is to say so here.

1694 that Peter the Great made his first ship, and sent it sailing away to Holland. And then, in 1700, they began ships of war, and within a century many ships of seventy-four guns were launched here. But now the biggest boats built at Archangel are 'barks,' about 100 feet in length, rigged with a curious mixture of lug and fore-and-aft sails. These boats only draw about four feet with a cargo of 320 tons.

Of course as this year sees the two hundredth anniversary of the coming of Peter the Great to Archangel, it has been celebrated appropriately this summer.

It was on July 28, 1693, that the young Tsar paid his first visit to this northern country, described in the Russian paper from which I get these facts as 'the Gate of the Russian Empire.' 'I have promised,' he says, 'the Empress Mother not to go to sea, but only to gaze on it from the shore.' But his first view of the open sea was to influence all his life; and here, on the island of Solombol, he with his own hands laid the foundations of the first Russian mercantile ship.

I said just now that Archangel was outside the world of politics; and it is so in a special sense. No Nihilist makes it the centre of his activity, and the Jew trades there undisturbed. But nowhere, of course, in Russia do politics enter into the life of the people. Politics in Russia are the Tsar, and whatever he does is right. You cannot induce a Russian, at least in Archangel, to touch on politics even in friendly conversation. When the Tsar's 'name-day' comes round, as it did the other day, the houses are decorated for the event. But even this is controlled by the authority. 'Two flags for this house, three for yours, hang them out of the window,' and it is done. You must not think that because I have mentioned Peter the Great, you ever hear his name. Never! Archangel's memory goes no farther back than the late Tsar. They worship the late Tsar—they have made of him a saint, as they have made a Messiah of Alexander III. Ask them when the St. Petersburg railway is to be made, when the poor are to be better paid, when the children are to play in the sunshine instead of slaving in gangs in the ships—'When the Tsar comes' is always what they say. The Tsar will never come. I think they might take that as established if they would, though the other Tsars have come, passing up that way on pilgrimage to the Holy Isles, of which I shall tell you in my next letter.

Before I end this long letter I must just mention the birds

of the town. The grey crow is everywhere ; strutting along the pavements, perched on every hut, running in at open doors and searching the cook's pots for choice bits of fat. The magpie, too, is pretty well ubiquitous. When I was out shooting double-snipe the other day, three magpies followed the setters for I should say a mile or more, mobbing them, beating down at them, winding through the bushes close over their backs, chattering and screaming all the time. Blue rock-pigeons frequent the town and outlying villages in large flocks. They also are absurdly tame, and no one shoots them, for the pigeon is a semi-sacred bird. Ravens are here also. They come and wake up Mr. Cooke, the Vice-Consul, by tapping at his window in the early morning.

And the cats. In Archangel lives a race of curious blue-coloured cats. I have got a little kitten, which I am going to bring home. They are very distinct, not only in colour, but in character, from our cats at home. There is something of the tiger in their disposition, for they are extremely restless and seldom seem to settle down composedly to sleep. My little kitten is a perfect fiend at meal-times. It flies up on to the table repeatedly, however often you may throw it off ; and never stops squeaking—not mewing, but rather snarling—while the smell of food is about the room. Also, when you feed it, it does not stop and sniff at the food as our cats do, but springs on it at once and holds it, glaring round ; and this not because it is half-starved, for it has been thoroughly well fed for a week or more. But now I think I must leave the animals alone, or I shall never end this letter.

#### LETTER IV.

##### THE HOLY ISLES.

I HAVE just come back from a five days' stay on the Solovetskii or Holy Isles. It has been so interesting that I must try and tell you a little about it. You will find this group of islands lying just east of Kem. The largest of the group is about thirteen miles long by eight or nine in width at the widest, that is the north part. They are all of granite, and over the granite lies a sandy soil.

These islands are considered 'holy' because of a famous monastery which has been there for many years. I took with me a capital Russian boy who could talk English, and after a most exhausting system of pumping everyone we came across, and by

getting inscriptions and epitaphs translated, and so on, I formed some idea of the history of the place. Its story runs much like this.

In the fifteenth century a monk named Savvatii started from, I don't know where, in 'search of solitude.' It pleased me to hear of this old monk and his search. He must have been a plucky old fellow to trust himself alone (as I suppose he did, or in the wretched fishing lodkas of that time) to the cruel coasts and other risky chances of the White Sea. But he went coasting along till at last he found solitude (pretty definite solitude, I should imagine) on this island of Solovetsk.

Here he set himself down, built a little church, and ministered I suppose to the sealers and fishermen who worked those seas. But he must have had, this old monk, a fearful time of it in winter on his island.

Anyhow, he established a reputation for himself and his island. And after a bit he seems to have heard of another monk who, either with a view to solitude, or against his will, had been stranded on the coast ever so far away and was ill. So the good and plucky Savvatii took again to the water and brought this kindred spirit home to Solovetsk. The name of this second man was Sosima, and they two are held the founders of the Solovetskii monastery.

Of course, as a matter of fact, every man drawn from the coast, whether monk or not, would be quite used to the water. In a curious Russian paper, which I have got hold of, a priest writing an account of a journey by boat, taken in 1841, for the purpose of baptising Samoyeds, after telling how he 'sang Te Deums for three days before starting,' goes on to explain that he is an excellent sailor and capable withal. As he quaintly says: 'One cannot gain much lying on one's back. If you use knowledge and prudence in dealing with the sea you shall never be a loser. We Pomoes know well how to sail. Every child knows how to manage an oar; and even women—beings inferior to men in every respect—would know how to direct a rudder.'

One likes to think of these plucky old monks coasting about these rough shores and bringing one another off, like old seals. I shall feel something like them next year when I sail away in my little boat for Kolguef.

Well, the fame of this monastic settlement must have gone up by leaps and bounds, for in 1470—which was only some twenty years or so from Savvatii's landing—the possession of Solovetsk was granted them from Novgorod 'for ever.'

Of course the place is full of legends about these two men and the wonderful things they did. Some of these stories are very quaint, but I have not time to tell them now. They still show you the chapel built by Savvatii, and these two lie side by side in the cathedral in two splendid tombs.

But you have to go raking about for details of these original founders, for their names have been smothered a good deal by the greater fame of one St. Philip. They are very fond of St. Philip at Solovetsk; and they ought to be so, for not only was he a Solovetskii monk, raised to great honour, but he worked up the monastery into a splendid position, and finally died 'a martyr.'

St. Philip came of a wealthy family. He was attached to the Court of the Tsar, Ivan the Terrible, but in what capacity I did not learn.

At all events, in 1539 he left the court and entered Solovetsk as a monk. He found it a place of little wooden chapels and miserable huts; he left it with a fortified stone monastery, a really fine cathedral, and more than one well-built church. In short, the whole working organism of Solovetsk is due to him. They called him back to Moscow after he had been seventeen years in Solovetsk, and made him Metropolitan of all Russia.

Now Ivan the Terrible, among his other eccentricities, was like our Norman kings in that he loved to lay waste the lands about. But he was much worse than they were, for he did it not for purposes of sport, nor did he do it in so kind a way. His idea was simply to thin out the districts so that there might be no mutterings and no crowd. Therefore when a district became a little too much overstocked for his liking, out he rode with sword in hand and thinned it. And one day, when starting on a hunt of this kind, in which he expected extraordinary sport, and to be able to depopulate pretty well a certain district, he chanced upon his Metropolitan, whom he straightway asked to bless the expedition. But Philip the Bishop not only refused, but expostulated with him on his cruelty. Hereupon, without more demur, Ivan dropped him into prison and had him strangled there. This was in 1569.

In 1591 they brought his remains with great ceremony to Solovetsk, and buried them there under the grass of the little cemetery.

But his fame grew more, and miracles formed themselves around his sanctity, so that seventy years later they dug up his body and buried it again—this time right in the middle of the

Cathedral. Even so they could not let the Bishop rest, and six years later (1652) they got him up again and moved him off to Moscow, leaving behind, however, a few of his smaller bones, which have done many wonders since.

St. Philip was a very fair artist, and a large fresco in the cathedral—the Massacre of the Innocents—by his hand really has considerable merit, though it does not do by the side of the really fine paintings by old Moscow painters which adorn this cathedral.

We went over to the islands in *Michael the Archangel*, one of the three small steamers which ply between there and Archangel. These boats are manned entirely by monks, and it is curious to see captain and crew all dressed in the monastic habit; the brown cassock and fur muff-shaped hat, called the klobook. We had a nasty choppy passage, but should have spent a fairly good night had it not been for the interruptions of the steward who often came to poke up a little lamp which hung before St. Peter's ikon in the cabin.

About twelve o'clock in the day we arrived, making our way in through a narrow rocky passage where the tide was running like a mill-race. The wharf was crowded with monks and pilgrims come down to see the boat arrive.

Pilgrims come from all parts of Russia to this monastery, even, they told me, from the China frontier; for it ranks third in importance among the monasteries of Russia, and, of course, has virtues in which it stands alone. The Tsars have all paid pilgrimages to this place with the exception of the present Tsar. And he, they say, is coming; but I do not think he will.

The monastery as seen on the approach is really very imposing. It is most beautifully situated. In front lies the beautiful bay; right and left are rocks and forests; behind, and washing its very walls, a little lake.

The monastery consists of a central square fortification inclosing the cathedral, refectories, workshops, and monks' quarters generally, and flanking this outside are the guest-house, stables, cemetery, docks, and so on.

The fortifications are curious. They consist of a wide roofed-in staging running round inside walls of considerable thickness, loopholed, and built of stone, and flanked by big circular towers. The armoury contains a queer collection of antique weapons, such as bows, arrows, catapults, guns, cannon balls, and many queer-fashioned implements very hard to make out.

Solovetsk has been once bombarded. We bombarded it. It was during the Crimean war. Admiral Ommaney went up there in 1854 with two small frigates, the *Brisk* and *Miranda*. As a matter of fact, he did very little damage. Indeed, he could scarcely have hoped to do much with the guns of that period, for he could not bring his ships nearer than 1,200 yards or so. But he told the monks to hand over their military stores. And as they would not he opened fire, and pegged away for some five or six hours, while the monks on their side blazed away also.

The monks naturally make a great deal of this. Religiously they preserve the balls just where they struck and stuck—one over the cathedral door, several in the old refectory, and elsewhere, painting them round with red paint, and writing about it underneath. They are quite certain that they conquered the English that time, and so, for that matter, they did. I felt quite small, I can assure you, when they told me all about it.

Their own account of the siege is one of the funniest things imaginable. They really thought they were all dead men, but still they formed processions and carried their banners about in the pluckiest way. They were pretty rich even at that time, for they managed to send some 200,000*l.* away to St. Petersburg just before the war.

This Solovetskii monastery is absolutely self-contained ; clothes, boots, implements, beer (or rather 'kvas'), bread—these and all necessaries of life are made within the walls. The bells of the cathedral were founded here, and splendid bells they are ; the biggest weighs 10,000 pood (a pood = 36 lbs.).

There are on the island about 300 monks and 300 labourers. Labour is very cheap at Solovetsk, for it costs nothing at all. It is obtained in this way. A man having a wife or child ill makes a pilgrimage to Solovetsk. Then he registers a vow that if by the intercession of the monks the wife or child recovers, he will go and serve on the island as a workman for a stated period, and go he does. By these means a sufficient supply of labour is kept up. The school of painting is very interesting ; many of the boys are beautiful draughtsmen, making designs for windows, frescoes, and other illuminated work.

We went, of course, to meals in the monastery. Besides the fine Cathedral of the Annunciation, which I have no space to describe in this letter, they have various chapels, and in particular two churches—the winter and the summer Churches of the Assumption, one above the other. In the winter Assump-

tion Church the 'Trapeza' is held. This meal is worth describing.

All is silence, excepting for the voice of a father who reads from a rostrum the Beatitudes or some other part of the New Testament. We sit, according to degree, at various long tables, at the head of one of which is the monk, usually the sub-archimandrite, who controls. He rings his bell. Instantly the choir appear, bringing in food. This is placed rapidly in position, one dish between four persons. We four at our dish have a spoon apiece, with which we make successive dives into the bowl or dish and feed. As soon as the bell-monk thinks we have had enough, he sounds his bell, and instantly again the train of choristers appears. In a trice they have removed your bowl and put another in its place. Excellent waiting. I did not take much to the fare. We had five courses:—

1. Bread and kvass.
2. Soup, very oniony and thin, with hard bits of fish in it.
3. Rice and milk.
4. Raw herring and vinegar with onions.
5. Apparently a mixture of the four previous.

After Trapeza (which takes place at 11 and 8) we put our offerings into boxes, for no charge is made.

Now, no birds or animals are ever allowed to be killed on these islands, and the consequence is they are all exceedingly tame. For example, as we were driving through the forest in a droski with Father Ivan, a fox proceeded to cross the road very leisurely in front. We pulled up and I got out and walked up to him. He allowed me to come close up to him, and when I clapped my hand right at his brush, just moved slowly off under protest into the stuff.

While we were there they brought in a wild reindeer, who had become caught up by his horns (which were then in the velvet) between the branches of a tree. This animal paid no attention to the crowd who stood round him on the green, but fed quietly on the grass, only kicking out at anyone who came too near.

The gulls are most interesting. If you appear at the door of the guest-house with a few bits of bread they come flying in across the sea and fight for the pieces all round your legs just as chickens do in a farmyard. They will even take bits from your hand. I was very anxious to bring one of these birds back alive, and succeeded after much trouble.

First of all I had to lay my wishes before the archimandrite.

He declined to have any cognisance of the matter. He would leave it to the Naimaistnic—an official somewhere between a policeman and a major domo. After much private talk and cajoling, it was due really to the kind offices of Father Ivan that the Naimaistnic said: 'Very well, if no one saw the bird captured, and if I would promise faithfully not to hurt it, and promise that it should always live in a beautiful garden with other birds to talk with, then—well, he would not give permission (that had never been done at Solovetsk), but he would look the other way. So one morning I happened to be passing the bakery door when a fine young herring gull, or lesser black-backed gull (I really cannot distinguish between the immature plumage of these two birds), came flying down and walked into the passage to see what he could find. At once I stooped down and picked him up. He bit me through the finger, but I stuffed him under my coat and bolted down to the guest-house—a smothered squeaking going on all the time. When I turned him loose in the room I was a fearsome thing; for he had been very ill indeed on the way, though we had only travelled a hundred yards or so. However, there he is now on the ship in the pen where the old goose used to live.

There is a very great deal more that I should like to say about this place, but what with one thing and another it is absolutely impossible to find time for it now.

## *The Valley of Dreams.*

THERE lies a wooded valley in the West,  
 With fern-clad hills above on either side,  
 Down which, on silent wings, the owlets glide  
 When all is wrapped in rest.  
 No sound all night the charmèd stillness breaks,  
 Save one small stream, that drops from pool to pool,  
 'Midst wealth of twilight hollows, green and cool,  
 And little mimic lakes.

Here never stir the white wings of the snow,  
 Nor ever through the boughs, worn sad and bare  
 With whirl of leaves out of their mountain lair  
 The winds of winter blow.  
 But the soft moonlight, glancing down the vale,  
 Sees ever flowers and leaves and shady trees,  
 Stirring their frondage to the gentle breeze,  
 Whose whisperings never fail.

Here in the farthest bower, and fount of streams,  
 I saw a couch of crimson rose-leaves spread,  
 And, one white arm beneath her royal head,  
 The queen of happy dreams.

No word speaks she through all the silent hours,  
 But ever smiles and smiles, with far-off gaze ;  
 And soft is her dark hair as summer haze,  
 Her lips as fair as flowers.

And ever and anon there issue forth  
 Out of the bower tall shapes as thin as air,  
 But all with dreamy eyes and lustrous hair,  
 And wander south and north :

Some have gay pinions, hued like butterflies,  
Which are day-dreams of many a happy heart ;  
While others, with faint sighs, step forth apart—  
Night visions for sad eyes.

In every bower along the valley sleep  
All the sweet dreams that poets' eyes have seen ;  
And long and happy is their rest, I ween,  
Their silence very deep.

There sleeps sweet Hero, with the salt sea-spray  
Still glistening on her hair ; there Procris lies,  
The fatal shaft beside her, and her eyes  
In slumber many a day.

All the fair daughters of the Grecian lyre,  
And all that bards have sung of far and wide,  
Are stored in slumber here, on every side,  
Still as a burnt-out fire.

And while I wandered, all my heart was fain  
To dwell in that fair valley evermore,  
And never hear again earth's tempests roar  
With drifts of flying rain.

But as I stood, wrapped in sweet fantasy,  
My soul's thoughts wandered to the world around,  
And suddenly I seemed to hear a sound—  
The sea-wind and the sea.

And all my heart cried, Oh, for freer breath,  
Swift action, and the windy ways of earth !  
Too soon comes silence and the end of mirth,  
And the long dream of death.

S. C. CORNISH WATKINS.

## *The Apostle of Port Royal.*

Par divers moyens on arrive à pareille fin.

MONTAIGNE.

DENIS DE L'ISLE, the runaway monk, looking down upon the convent of Port Royal des Champs, blessed the Providence which had brought him to so desirable a haven. The summer sun burned upon the summit of the hills that inclosed the valley on all sides save the east ; but the trim gardens and sumptuous buildings of the nunnery lay in a cool blue shadow ; the bells, chiming to vespers, made a peaceful music ; a lazy spiral of smoke curled from the kitchen chimney ; and the wayfarer, leg-weary, hungry, and athirst, descended the hillside filled with the most comfortable anticipations.

At this time all France was ringing with the exploits of King Henry of Navarre, who had lately entered Paris in triumph ; and Denis de l'Isle was on his way to the capital in the hope of obtaining a place about the Court. Within a few leagues of his destination, the adventurer found himself somewhat ragged and almost penniless ; yet it was highly necessary that he should enter the city in some more taking guise than that of a starveling monk. Port Royal des Champs was richly endowed, and the nuns bore a reputation for some frivolity of conversation. Hence the convent appeared to Denis a singularly attractive house of entertainment, and by the time he reached the entrance he had made and unmade a thousand ingenious plans of spoliation.

The porter was absent from the gate-house, and the doors stood open to all comers—a negligence which went far to confirm the monk in his pleasing belief as to an habitual laxity of discipline. He entered the courtyard, which was empty save for the pigeons ; in front of him rose the tall buttresses and traceried windows of the chapel, and in the angle formed by the junction of the courtyard wall with that of the transept an oaken door stood open. Passing through it, Denis found himself in the Strangers'

Burying Ground, an oblong inclosure with an archway in the farther wall, through which he could see (like a picture set in a frame) the nuns in their white habits walking to and fro in the cloister garden. In the centre of the square inclosure stood a great stone cross, upon the steps of which a little figure was sitting in an attitude of meditation, her graceful outline strongly relieved against the black shadows of the cloister arcading beyond. As the monk paused in the doorway she looked up, rose, and came towards him, and Denis saw to his surprise that she was scarcely older than a child.

'Pardon me, my father,' she said with dignity, 'but strangers are not permitted to enter the cloisters. Follow me, if you please.'

Denis, he knew not why, was plunged by this unexpected greeting into an extreme embarrassment. Beside this dainty little nun he felt rude, unkempt, and clumsy; and he walked silently behind her like a schoolboy detected in a trespass. It was not until his guide had ushered him into the reception-room provided for visitors that he plucked up courage to thank her for her courtesy, at the same time requesting her to acquaint the Mother Superior with the arrival of a friar who craved a night's hospitality.

'I am the Mother Superior, and Port Royal welcomes you, as she doth all strangers, but especially those of the household of Holy Church,' said the little nun glibly, as if repeating a phrase learned by rote. 'I will go and tell Father Jehan you are come,' she added, her manner suddenly changing to that of ordinary intercourse. 'He will ask you to sup with him, and invite you to preach to-morrow. Do you like preaching?'

'Why, as to that,' said Denis, set a little more at ease, 'I think it likely that I discover more pleasure in that exercise than doth the congregation.'

'That is what I have always thought to myself,' returned the Abbess eagerly. 'Oh, I would dearly love to preach!'

'And I to hear you,' said Denis politely.

'You are a strange monk,' remarked the Abbess, looking at him curiously. 'You are not like Father Jehan, nor the friars who come sometimes.'

'Perhaps I am not a monk at all,' he returned. 'What would you say to that?'

'I had a dream once,' she said, still staring absently at him, 'and now it comes into my mind that perhaps you are the man.'

'And what was the dream?' asked Denis, somewhat taken aback.

But a fit of shyness fell upon the Abbess; she took refuge in her character of Mother Superior, and murmuring that she would despatch a servant to minister to the holy father's wants, she withdrew abruptly, leaving the monk to contend with some emotions new to his experience.

It was no uncommon practice in those days for an influential family, in order to keep the disposal of the property in their own hands, to place a mere child at the head of a great establishment such as Port Royal. Denis was naturally aware of this custom, and that his youthful hostess should occupy so exalted a position did not strike him as exceptional; but something in the personality of the demure and ingenuous maiden captivated him at a blow. He was inspired all at once with an overmastering desire to find favour in her eyes.

Denis supped that night with Father Jehan the Chaplain, a little, old, red gentleman with a puckered face, and a voice that sounded as though its owner were always on the point of tears. After requesting Denis to preach on the morrow (a compliment invariably accorded in those days by the monastic clergy to their ecclesiastical visitors) and receiving his assent, Father Jehan displayed an insatiable appetite for news of the great world outside the convent policies. Denis related all he knew, and more, till what with the wine and the talk his senior's face began to shine, and he grew happy and expansive as a child.

'If all I have heard be true, brother,' Denis hinted presently, 'the Sisters of Port Royal find time between orisons and visiting the poor for gayer employments.'

'Eh, you come a little too late, young man,' replied the confessor, cocking an eyebrow. 'Since they put a chit of a girl over the heads of her elders there has been a wonderful improvement in godliness. She seems to impart a taste for piety without intending it. And why not, I say, for Mère Angélique is a worthy little child at heart, and as easy as an old shoe about the discipline. When you come to carry my weight, brother, you'll find the benefit of a judicious forbearance.'

'Is she, then, so terribly *dévote*?' inquired Denis.

'She takes to religion as you and I to—to wine, brother,' said the Chaplain. 'Or would, did I allow it. Fill up and pass the bottle. But I don't.'

'Why not?' Denis asked.

'Jehan sum, non Paulus,' replied his host sleepily; and indeed at the moment the excellent confessor much more resembled the heathen god Silenus than any member of the Christian hierarchy.

But Denis had obtained the clue he wanted; did he desire to gain the favour of the Abbess, it was clear that he must pose as an apostle. He abandoned some alluring projects with a sigh, and resolved, since so it must be, to clothe himself for the nonce in garments of light. So bidding Father Jehan good-night, he repaired to his lodging, and sat down to compose an oration for the morrow. Brother Denis had a poetic spark in his constitution; he could wield the spell of language; a born opportunist, he would denounce vanity in a sermon, or improvise a ballad in praise of folly, with equal sincerity and conviction. Thus by the time his discourse was complete, he was so sensibly affected by his own exhortations, that had he been a martyr condemned to execution at sunrise, this remarkable zealot could not have lain down to sleep in a more fervent glow of pious enthusiasm.

The Chapel of Port Royal in later years echoed to the eloquence of the greatest divines in France; but its walls never rang with a more stirring admonition than that delivered by the vagrant monk next morning. He had, as it were, laid a wager with himself to compel the admiration of the slender girl who sat beneath the foliated canopy of the Abbess's throne, listening with such a rapt attention. But intent as he was upon this enterprise, he took careful note (while Father Jehan gabbled a perfunctory mass) of the rich ornaments and furniture of the sanctuary; for from amongst the profusion of gifts upon the altar he must pick the corner-stone of his fortune's edifice. Brother Denis would have been well advised had he then and there seized an opportunity to hide the golden and bejewelled pyx under his frock, and made good his escape. But the desire of seeing Mère Angélique once more was too strong for him, and after wandering about the precincts for hours in the hope of meeting her, the monk found himself in the Ambulatory, a broad pathway running between the north wall of the convent and the fish-ponds, beneath an avenue of great trees. On the farther side of the pool the woods climbed the hillside into the sky, so that the still water held a reflected forest, where fish swam among the branches. Presently a door in the wall opened, and a thrill shook Denis as he saw Mère Angélique step from the sunlit garden into the green shade. She hesitated a moment, and then advanced timidly towards him. Her face

was pale, and disfigured with the marks of tears. The monk felt instinctively that their relative positions were reversed. He had gained his ignoble wager.

‘What ails you, my daughter?’ he said kindly. ‘Are you in trouble?’

‘In great trouble of mind, father,’ she answered ; and the tones of her voice told of such distress that the monk’s heart smote him. ‘I would make you my confession, for I am sore in need of absolution and ghostly counsel. Like a great light your words have illumined the darkness of my heart, and discovered my sin to me.’

Denis perceived that he had overshot his mark. He had proposed to himself to act a part extremely opposed to that of father confessor, and thus his plans again suffered an unforeseen reverse. So he constrained himself to listen, marvelling at the extraordinary refinement of conscience revealed in such a relation, and wondering what he was to say to it all. To treat the whole matter lightly would be to step down from his pedestal, while to deal strictly with such a penitent was more than he could do. He decided upon compromise, and, telling the Abbess he would set her a fitting penance on the morrow (by which time the confessor resolved he would be some miles on the road to Paris), he gave her absolution.

But when, consoled and happy as a forgiven child, she had left him, Denis lingered till the bats began to squeak in the twilight, and the moon, peering over the rim of the hills, flung a track of gold upon the water. The monk stood and looked at that shining pathway. Should he follow the gleam of gold across the water and over the hills to unknown glories? Or should he stay and make his abode in that remote and quiet valley, under the rule of the charming little Abbess? When he retired for the night, his heated imagination wove a series of brilliant pictures before his eyes, and he fell asleep in a state of miserable indecision. But next morning Denis awoke at dawn, with his brain clear, and the wheels of his mind running as if they had been oiled. He reviewed the position at a glance, and made his decision. Between matins and prime the church would be empty ; here was his opportunity ; what childish folly to fling it away for a passing fancy! And as the rising sun washed the pinnacles of the chapel with gold, Denis hurried across the sleeping courtyard, and entered the building by the door in the north transept. The place held so deep a silence that his very breathing sounded loud and harsh ; he stole to the gate in the iron grille that shut off the transept

from the body of the church, opened it cautiously, and paused, struck motionless on the threshold. The tapers burned, dots of pale orange, upon the altar; high above them a strong beam of sunlight slanted through the great east window, making a broad, misty radiance alive with dancing atoms; the jewelled gewgaws gleamed darkly behind the altar lights; but between them and the monk knelt Mère Angélique, absorbed in devotion. All the adventurer's cunning resolutions went suddenly out of his head. Crossing silently to the suppliant figure he touched her on the shoulder.

'Peace be to you, my daughter,' he said gently. She started and turned with a faint cry; then a shade of disappointment fell swiftly across her bright face.

'Ah, my father, it is you!' she said quickly. 'I had thought it the Christ Himself,' she added under her breath. 'I have been praying so hard all night that He would show me some token of His favour—but, alas! His heaven is fast shut.'

The pathos in her voice pierced the masquerader's susceptible heart. He knelt down and put his arm round her.

'Ay,' he said, 'the heaven is shut, but never grieve for that, *cherie*! I was a monk once, and I tell you this religion is all a dream.'

She drew herself away, gazing at him in bewilderment.

'A dream!' she said. 'A dream! In *my* dream I saw you standing in the cloister doorway, and upon your forehead was God's seal, I thought. What is it you are saying? I do not understand.'

'Come away with me, Angélique,' cried the reckless Denis. 'Come out into the brave world beyond these gloomy walls. There is feasting and fighting, making love and marrying—there life marches gaily to music down a road bestrewn with flowers. Will you stay for ever in this miserable sepulchre? Will you waste your beauty in fruitless prayer and fasting? You will find the true God out-of-doors in the sunshine, *cherie*.'

Mère Angélique stared at him, horror dawning in her eyes. She had risen while Denis was speaking, and he stood in front of her, holding her hands. But when he paused she wrenched herself away from him.

'Oh,' she cried, 'how can you talk so wickedly? I think you must be the Devil! Or perhaps you are only trying my faith. Oh, say you are only trying my faith,' she pleaded piteously.

Denis hesitated a moment. The child's words opened a last

avenue of escape from the consequences of his folly. With a stout effort he regained command over himself, and his mobile countenance changed instantly to an expression of solemnity.

‘My daughter,’ he said gravely, ‘thou hast rightly guessed. Did I not tell thee I would inflict a penance? Behold, it is accomplished! *Absolvo te.*’

Mère Angélique, completely unstrung, startled the monk by falling at his feet in a passion of tears.

‘Then it is true, after all; and thou art the messenger I saw in my dream,’ she sobbed. ‘Thou hast shown me the hidden path of righteousness, my father, and I will try—I will try to walk therein.’

‘That is well. Give me thine hand—so,’ said Denis, raising her. ‘Now dry thy tears, and I would counsel thee to seek rest until noonsong. Adieu, my daughter. *Dieu vous bénisse!*’

The little Abbess bestowed upon him a look of childlike gratitude that the monk remembered all his shifty life; and still shaken with weeping, but serenely happy, she walked slowly away from him down the church. Denis, left alone upon the altar steps, stood gazing after her until the door, clangling heavily, hid her from his sight. The sound struck dismally upon his heart, arousing a sense of loss and discomfiture. Then he turned wistfully to the tempting wealth upon the altar, and shook his head with a wry face.

‘Comes a maiden, and all a man’s plans are upset one by one,’ he murmured. ‘To rob a church—*fi donc!* how inconsistent with the *rôle* of an apostle. No, one cannot have everything. Denis de l’Isle comes as a thief and a robber; and lo! he must shine as a saint, and depart in a halo of sanctity. Ignatius Loyola himself could do no more. And it would be a thousand pities to risk again the disillusion of *la belle Angélique*. I will flee temptation . . . *mais, mon Dieu, que je demeure sot en trois lettres!*’

Ten minutes later, Mère Angélique, kneeling at her open casement, watched the figure of a monk walk swiftly down the white road into the rosy sunrise, and dwindle out of sight upon the brightness.

And is it not written in the *Chronicles of Port Royal des Champs* how the establishment of austere discipline, from which resulted the lofty reputation for piety enjoyed ever afterwards by the Sisters, dated from the visit of a stranger who preached a most wonderful sermon and then vanished away, no one knew whither?

L. COPE CORNFORD.

## *The Cinderella of Civilisation.*

THE subject of this article is going to be india-rubber. The reader must therefore not be astonished if my treatment of it at first appears a trifle elastic.

Somebody lately pointed out somewhere, in an evening paper, that if it had not been for flint there would have been no civilisation. Evolving man, said Somebody, needed some natural material for making weapons and implements of the simplest character. Metals would not do, of course, for metals are hard to find, difficult to smelt, and rare in their distribution. Indeed, it seems pretty clear nowadays that the earliest metal ever employed for human purposes was native copper, which occasionally occurs in a pure metallic form; and that the earliest weapons manufactured from it were hammered cold, not cast or melted. And this obviously implies the prior existence of the stone hammer to beat them with. Moreover, when bronze was first invented and used in place of the beaten copper, on account of its greater hardness and finer cutting edge, the primitive bronze hatchets were directly modelled upon the pre-existing stone ones, which were embedded in moist clay so as to form a mould for the molten metal. Hence it is clear that early man could only reach the age of bronze after a long slow tutelage in an age of stone; his earliest implements must needs have been made of some common, easy, and universally diffused material. Flint alone, said the essayist, answers all the requirements of the situation.

So far, in effect, our anonymous Mentor. He will have it that flint is *the* indispensable condition precedent of civilisation, or, for the matter of that, of the existence of humanity. In a sense, no doubt, he is right; for flint, we must admit, played an enormous part in the evolution of our race; though it would, perhaps, be fairer to call it *a* condition than *the* condition of human progress. Men got on somehow, too, even where flint was not; they fell back upon other stones, or upon shell and bone, wood, horn, and

coral. Nevertheless, it is possible that unless the race had first begun to develop where flint was common and easily procured, it might never have learned the use of a cutting edge, on which all civilisation is ultimately founded.

'And what has all this to do with india-rubber?'

Well, I told you at the outset it mustn't surprise you if my treatment was elastic. Who drives fat oxen must himself be fat, and who writes of rubber must himself be expansive. I am getting round to our caoutchouc gradually. Goad not my Pegasus: he runs but ill in harness, and detests a bearing-rein. There are a great many substances which similarly seem to us indispensable to civilisation—after we have learnt to use them. What could we do nowadays, for example, without glass? It appears to our age as if this particular human modification of flint was absolutely necessary to any high state of culture. We might, indeed, use porcelain in its place for tumblers and wine-glasses (though the very name of a porcelain wineglass seems a practical contradiction); or we might all be converted by Sir Benjamin Richardson, and do without either wineglasses or wine altogether. But how about windows? It seems to us now as if the very existence of the home, the book, literature, art, and science depended upon that single property of transparency. And yet I have somehow a shrewd suspicion that if glass were not, most things would still be pretty much the same as they are at present. The nations that knew not glass contrived to do without it; they even built great palaces and temples with hypathral courts; and when light in the house grew a necessity of advance, I imagine they would have managed to find a substitute. In short, all indispensable things are probably indispensable only because we have them. If we hadn't got them, we might do without; though far more probably we should discover some alternative indispensable, just as good as the existing one. Our civilisation might differ in innumerable petty details; we might have unfamiliar cups, and picture-frames, and *bobèches* for candles; but it would be civilisation still, not utter barbarism.

It is always fascinating, and always futile, to speculate on the 'might have been'; yet, futile as it is, one can't help doing it. So let me illustrate once more by a wide human analogy. No one great man was ever indispensable. If Darwin had never lived, for example, we should still be evolutionists in this latter end of the nineteenth century. Herbert Spencer would have given us the general doctrine of evolution; Alfred Russel Wallace would

even have formulated for us the distinctive Darwinian theory of natural selection, which he independently discovered in an opposite hemisphere. But if Charles Darwin had died of measles at Shrewsbury, the world in ten thousand minor ways would have been not a little different. Evolutionism would still perhaps be struggling upward for recognition as in the days of the sixties ; and various sides of it would be regarded, no doubt, from quite other aspects. Certainly thousands of English homes would miss a familiar set of green-covered volumes ; and Dr. Murray's great English Dictionary would lack many pages devoted to the words Darwinian and Darwinism. For though other great men would have done in part the work actually done for us by that one great man, it is not likely they would have done it in quite the same way ; nor is it probable that one of them would have borne by pure coincidence the now famous and honoured name of Darwin.

Having thus conclusively shown that nothing is indispensable, I shall pass on to prove the indispensability of india-rubber.

When one writes like that, I observe that certain stupid people accuse one of inconsistency. I know only one way of curing this form of mental narrowness—and that is by getting an india-rubber brain extension.

Certainly in our own day it really seems as if we couldn't possibly get on without india-rubber and gutta-percha. Though both are of comparatively recent introduction, the number of purposes to which they are applied is so immense that our civilisation without them would at least be very different from the form in which we actually know it. To lump a few miscellaneous examples in a single paragraph—without those two, submarine cables would be almost impossible, telegraphy would assume many unlike modifications, goloshes would not exist, waterproofs and mackintoshes would be a beautiful dream, and a rubberless world a hideous reality. Elastic, in the sense in which ladies use the word, for tying hats or making garters, would never have been evolved ; tobacco-pouches would still be of silk or leather ; our combs would be of horn ; and our buttons, paper-knives, pen-holders, and pipes much dearer than at present. As for machinery, where would it be without india-rubber cinctures, and tubes, and cups, and valves, and buffers ? Where would engineering be without the endless minute applications of the elastic gum ? Where would surgery be without the innumerable devices, the syringes and squirts, the belts and bandages, of which india-rubber forms the sole and, as it seems to us now, indispensable basis ? Fancy

putting out fires without the invaluable hose ; fancy whirring manufactoryes without the inevitable gearing. The bicyclist would miss his pneumatic tyres ; the artist would miss his ever handy eraser. When we go to the dentist, which is always in itself a delightful excursion, a happy hour is made happier for us by the india-rubber sheet with which he dexterously contrives to check undue loquacity. When we go to the gymnasium, half the apparatus we employ is based on it. And what would life be at the present day without india-rubber hot-water bottles ?

Take a single little unobtrusive case, which might easily escape the casual observer's mind—I mean the common ginger-beer and soda-water bottle. Let us consider it well, and then thank heaven we are not casual observers. It has a glass marble in the neck, which is pressed against a glass collar within, by the expansive energy of the gas in the bottle. Now suppose we had to make a glass ball like that fit exactly a glass neck to the bottle, the ball would have to be an ideally perfect sphere, and the neck would have to be an ideally perfect circle. If they were absolutely smooth and absolutely round, the two would fit, and the bottle would be effectively corked by its round glass stopper. But I need hardly say that such absolute smoothness and absolute roundness are hardly attainable save by the most beautiful machinery ; and the expense of making a perfectly true ginger-beer bottle without the use of india-rubber would be something quite prodigious. Here, however, our Cinderella of Civilisation steps in as the fairy godmother. A little ring of india-rubber, a most inconspicuous ring which I dare say till this moment you have never noticed, lies just inside the neck of the bottle ; against it the ball is pressed by the expansive energy of the gas ; and its elasticity enables it to do easily and cheaply the work which would otherwise have to be done at great expense by perfect smoothness and roundness in the rigid material.

And now you will perhaps begin to see why I call india-rubber the Cinderella of Civilisation. It lurks as it were in the back kitchen of invention, and is never in evidence ; but it does most of the hard work, all the same, and is worthy the diligent quest of the Prince, who detects it at last by the aid of its goloshes. Our ginger-beer bottle is a type of thousands of mechanical devices where india-rubber is employed, and where it plays unobtrusively like a household drudge a necessary and important social function. Yet, in looking at the engine, you hardly even notice it. I will give but one more example, which occurs

to me as I write. This article is now being produced on a type-writer. I omit all mention of the elastic bands which turn the feed-supply rollers of the machine ; but where the type actually strikes the paper, it hits the ink-ribbon above an india-rubber cylinder, which acts as a pad just hard enough and just soft enough to receive the impact ; the caoutchouc checks and deadens the blow, without hurting or blunting the sharp edges of the type, as any less elastic material would do. And there you get the key-note of the usefulness of india-rubber. Its one strong point is its unrivalled elasticity—an elasticity which can be modified in every case to almost any desired degree by special treatment and by admixture of other materials.

Every house nowadays is full of an endless variety of small devices based upon india-rubber in one form or another. It is so elastic that it applies itself to ten thousand purposes. Even its morals are elastic. For, on the one hand, it is used by surgeons for the most benevolent objects, in the way of bandages, trusses, beds, stockings, and knee-caps ; while, on the other hand, it is employed in various illegitimate ways by burglars, murderers, forgers, and counterfeiters, whose methods for obvious reasons I decline to specify even to the readers of this magazine, possession of which ought almost to be accepted as proof presumptive of the utmost integrity. You see, a copy might fall by chance into the hands of an occasional reader.

Indeed, this article being nothing if not elastic, I will venture to digress here into a curious little anecdote which the last sentence brings up by pure accident into my memory. A literary person was taken by the police into a thieves' lodging-house, where his attention was attracted by a very pretty and dainty-looking girl, who was seated by the fire in the common sitting-room, engaged in reading the periodicals of the day, like any other lady. 'Who is she?' he asked of his particular Inspector Bucket. 'The most expert woman pickpocket in London,' was the answer. Our author apologised to her for venturing to ask what book she was reading. It was a high-class magazine ; and she was deep in one of his own literary essays : which proves that the written word is just like india-rubber—it goes everywhere, and is applied to all sorts of unexpected purposes. What can be more terrible to the poor unobtrusive novelist, for example, than to hear a knotty question of etiquette, about which he has never for one moment troubled his soul, decided offhand by an appeal to an incident in one of his own novels? 'Lady Gwendoline

Fitz-Clarence said it—don't you remember?—in *The World's Delirium*; and she must have been right, because she was a duke's daughter!"

A writer who once realises this truly awful pervasiveness of the printed book, which may go anywhere and influence anybody, can never let a line set forth on its travels from his obscure study which is not actuated by the spirit of what seems to him the highest and deepest morality. And herein I am profoundly and seriously in earnest. He will avoid all acquiescence in conventional lies, all half-unconscious truckling to conventional prejudices, all tacit backing-up of conventional misconceptions, and cruelties, and terrors. He will try to say what is true and noble, to wage war as far as he can against what is false and soul-killing, remembering that his words may at any time be read by pure young girls and by men whose opinions and standards are still in the forming. And, thinking thus, he will probably revolt against the soulless despotism of the circulating library; he will probably infuse some suspicion, at least, of his moral ideas into whatever he writes—say, even a magazine article on india-rubber.

The candid reader will by this time, no doubt, have noticed that up to the present moment I have 'talked of many things,' like the walrus and the carpenter, but have not yet said a word as to what india-rubber is, or where it comes from. To tell the truth, there's no such thing; or, rather, there is not one india-rubber, but many india-rubbers. Just as sugar can be made indiscriminately out of almost anything, from sugar-cane and beet-root to grapes and palm-trees, just as alcohol can be made indiscriminately out of almost anything, from John Barleycorn and molasses to mare's milk and potatoes, so india-rubber can be made out of an immense variety of trees and plants, both tropical and northern. Caoutchouc exists, indeed, in almost all the milky-juiced herbs and weeds, as, for example, in our own pretty English wood-spurges; but it is only in warmer climates that it occurs in big trees and in sufficient quantities to be worth collecting commercially. The groups of plants which are richest in caoutchouc are the mulberries, the figs, the breadfruits, the euphorbias, the periwinkles, and the American milkweeds. From the larger members of these families in southern climates the mass of the india-rubber of commerce is procured—or, at least, it pretends to be—though commerce, no doubt, manages largely to supplement the genuine gum by 'that form of competition which is called adulteration.'

The common 'india-rubber plant' of our window gardens is the

only one of the caoutchouc-yielding trees at all familiarly known in England. But it is not, as most people imagine, the chief source of india-rubber. It merely produces an inferior sort, known commercially as East Indian, and mostly procured from Assam and the Himalayan region. Everybody knows this plant as grown in English drawing-rooms—a mere short, stiff shoot, with large glossy leaves, very hard and rigid, and famous for their callous indifference to the smoke and gas of our squalid village. But these are only small cuttings of the actual tree which in its native forests forms a noble and branching trunk, with abundant foliage. It is a fig by family, closely allied to that sacred object of Indian worship, the banyan.

By far the greater part of our india-rubber, however, comes from South America, and is the product of quite a different species, a great arborescent spurge, related to our inconspicuous little European wood-spurges. All the euphorbias have thick milky juice, which dries into india-rubber. Brazil, Guiana, Central America are the chosen homes of the true india-rubber tree; it is sixty or seventy feet high, and has leaves not at all unlike those of a scarlet runner. One grew in my own garden in Jamaica, where three years' observation of all its processes enabled me to become quite intimate with its domestic economy. But I will not inflict upon an unoffending world any 'cheerful facts' about its flowers and fruit, which lack general interest; I will content myself with saying that it grows abundantly on the low flooded islands of the Amazons, where thousands of Indians live by collecting the rubber in the dry season. They make slits in the bark, and catch the juice in cans, exactly as one does in tapping a sugar-maple. The milk thickens in the air, and very properly proceeds to produce a sort of cream, which is spread out thin like a paste on clay moulds, and dried by fire. It blackens as it dries, the process being no doubt to some extent assisted by the smoke from the fire and the dirty hands of the Indians.

This is what commerce describes as Para india-rubber, from its chief harbour of export. Many other kinds exist, with whose origin I will not weary a long-suffering generation—the Central American, which is the gum of a forest giant of the breadfruit family; the Ceara or Scrap-rubber, which is the juice of a plant closely allied to the cassava or tapioca; the Borneo, which flows, not from a tree, but from a creeper; the African, the Madagascar, the Mangava, and so forth. But, whatever the source, most of the india-rubber produced up to date is obtained from wild

trees or climbers ; and since the tapping seriously injures the plant, a great many of the native india-rubber forests have been slowly destroyed, especially as in many cases the trees are actually cut down by improvident natives, instead of being merely tapped and drained of their milky juices. Of late years, however, 'the subject has engaged the attention of the Indian Government,' as official documents put it ; and a large number of Brazilian and Central American rubber trees have been planted in various parts of Ceylon and India. It is hoped that these will in due time enable us to dispense with America altogether.

Often enough similar milky juices of india-rubber-yielding trees are used for food. Tropical Americans are familiar, for example, with the milky-juiced star-apple, an ally of the gutta-percha tree. Cassava or tapioca is a first cousin of the true india-rubber. But the most interesting case is that of the South American Palo de Vaca, or cow-tree, related to the Indian india-rubber fig (our common drawing-room plant), which has a nutritive milky sap, employed as an excellent substitute for milk at breakfast. Another cow-tree in Demerara is allied to the Madagascar caoutchouc ; while the cow-plant of Ceylon, which supplies a bland milk, is related to other india-rubber-yielding milk-weeds.

A hundred years ago there was no such thing, practically speaking, as india-rubber, at least in Europe. All the manifold uses of these elastic gums have sprung up entirely within the present century. And yet nowadays we can hardly imagine a world without india-rubber. Childhood would lack its most treasured playthings, and old age would find its toothless gums all gumless. Indeed, strange to say, it seems as if the earliest use to which india-rubber was put was that of making elastic balls such as children still play with. Columbus saw the happy Caribs of St. Domingo so beguiling their leisure with a bouncing ball before the blessings of Christianity and civilisation exterminated them ; while the Aztecs in Mexico had shoes and clothes of the elastic material—in point of fact, primitive mackintoshes and prehistoric goloshes. In South America caoutchouc was chiefly used by the Indians to make bottles or flasks, dried on a clay mould ; and so conservative is custom that when india-rubber was first exported to Europe it was exported in the form of these native vessels, in which shape, indeed, a small quantity even now reaches England. One sort of caoutchouc bears to this day the technical name of bottle-rubber.

The first india-rubber was sold in London in 1772. The earliest use to which it was applied was that of rubbing out pencil marks. And here again we see the conservatism of language. For at the present day caoutchouc is used for endless purposes in arts and manufactures; yet its name still recalls to us this first and simplest of its European functions. For fifty years it was hardly employed for any other purpose. Flexible tubes, such as are now so common in chemical and physical laboratories, were the first new departure; indeed, the very science of chemistry as we know it would scarcely be possible without glass and india-rubber. (You see I am now showing with frank inconsistency that, though nothing is indispensable, we couldn't get on for one day without caoutchouc.) In 1820, Macintosh of Glasgow introduced the first great application of india-rubber for an economic purpose by spreading it thin on cloth so as to make the tissue waterproof; and posterity has rewarded him by persistently and consistently mis-spelling his name as 'Mackintosh.' But it was in 1834 that Goodyear of New Haven, Connecticut, invented the process of 'vulcanising' rubber by an admixture of sulphur; and straightway a path was opened to endless new developments. According to the special varieties of the process, vulcanised rubber can be either hard and horny or soft and elastic. From that day on the uses of caoutchouc have become almost innumerable.

Nevertheless, to the end, the Cinderella of Civilisation remains for the most part a mere ancillary substance. We make very few things indeed entirely out of rubber, and those that we do make are mostly unimportant—dolls, toys, and tubing. But as parts of complex mechanisms, india-rubber buffers, belts, collars for machinery, pipes, and washers are almost necessary portions of every modern contrivance. We fasten caoutchouc round our windows to keep out draughts; we use it for the little knobs to prevent the door from opening too wide; we make elastic springs of it to shut the door behind us. Rails for railways have even been manufactured of it, and paving for footpaths. It forms an element in every sort of machine, and occurs in a dozen forms in the room where you are sitting. Search your pocket and you will find it on your purse and your note-book; turn to your table and you will observe it in the form of elastic rings round your bundle of letters; consider your clothing and you will note it at once in your braces or your waistband, according to circumstances. Keep an eye on it for a day and you will be fairly surprised how from

everything you turn to it stares at you imperturbably. You can't get away from it. For when you turn to flee it flees with you in the elastic sides of your boots; and when you try to cross the sea it makes up a thousand details of the ship you sail in.

As for gutta-percha, that is the somewhat similar milky juice of trees belonging to the star-apple or sapodilla order, and it comes for the most part from the peninsula of Malacca and the Malay Archipelago. It differs from india-rubber in being hardly at all elastic. Its chief use is as an electrical insulator, for which purpose it is largely employed in the manufacture of submarine cables. But it is also applied to many mechanical ends; and it would almost be a personal slight to a distinguished brother contributor at the 'Sign of the Ship' not to mention that it is the regulation material for golf balls.

And now I will tie up this elastic article in an india-rubber band and carry it in a hansom with india-rubber tyres to the nearest editor. If he returns it to me, marked in blue ink, with an india-rubber stamp, 'Declined with thanks,' let him dread my vengeance. India-rubber will revenge itself on india-rubber. I know a boy with a catapult in Paternoster Row, and the tempting expanse of those plate-glass windows—but, as Sairey Gamp says, 'Seek not to proticipate.'

GRANT ALLEN.

## *A Subject Race.*

**T**HEY knew not whence the tyrant came,  
 They did not even know his name ;  
 Yet he compelled them one and all  
 To bow in bondage to his thrall ;  
 And from their lips allegiance wrung,  
 Although a stranger to their tongue.

Whilst he was wrapped in royal state,  
 Their hours of toil were long and late ;  
 No moment could they call their own  
 Within the precincts of the throne ;  
 And when they dreamed their work was o'er,  
 He only made them slave the more.

Although the conquering king was he  
 Of people who had once been free,  
 No word of praise or promise fell  
 From him his subjects served so well ;  
 And none of those who crowned him lord  
 Received a shadow of reward.

Obedience to his behest  
 Destroyed their peace, disturbed their rest ;  
 Yet when his drowsy eyes grew dim,  
 No mortal dared to waken him :  
 They stole about with stealthy tread —  
 ‘The baby is asleep,’ they said.

ELLEN THORNEYCROFT FOWLER.

## *The Cavern of the Great Death.*

THIS IS THE STORY TOLD BY ABOU KIMCHI, PREACHER OF  
RIGHTEOUSNESS, AS CONCERNING THE CAVERN OF THE GREAT  
DEATH AND THE MAN WHOSE COMING SHOULD CHANGE THE  
FACE OF THE WORLD.

WHAT time the sword passed through the Abode of Peace, Baghdad, the City Given of God, not a single soul of all the nobles and rich merchants that dwelt in Rusafeh of Baghdad, east of the Tigris, was left to praise the One worthy of praise save only one lad of nine years, Khalid ben Shemseddin, whose father was chief of the merchants of rubies. For the Merciful One had given power over the lives of the Faithful to the Satans of Ulagou the Khan, brother of Kublai Khan of Tartary, so that none were left alive, neither men nor children nor women, and happy were they that were smitten by the edge of the sword, for that the torment they endured was the less. And the slaughter in the city of Baghdad alone was to the number of a thousand thousand and half a thousand thousand. And the Khalif, El Mustazim Billah, on whom be peace, the last of the Benou Abbas, was shut up in an iron cage, and he was given neither to eat nor to drink, save only of his own heaps of moneys of gold and silver, so that after four days he died miserably of thirst and hunger.

Now the deliverance of the lad Khalid from the mouth of the sword was on this wise. When the Satans of Ulagou, on whom may the Merciful not have mercy, came into the house of Shemseddin, they brought all that were in the house, Shemseddin and his wives and his children, and many slaves, both men and women, into the courtyard, as it were to the place of blood, and smote off their heads there so that the blood ran into the conduits. And a soldier stood by with a long leathern glove in his left hand, and with his right hand he dropped thereinto a black bean for every head that was stricken off, that the captain might know the

number of the slain. But when it came to the lad's turn that his head should be stricken off, the soldier that kept the count bade the executioner stay his hand, 'For lo, this that hath come between my fingers is no bean, but a pearl, the like of which we have found, no, not in the Khalif's treasure-houses.'

And the captain said, 'Show me the pearl.' And he took it and saw that it was even as the reckoner of heads had said. And he spake to the executioner: 'Spare this lad, for he hath paid the price of his blood, and belike his coming shall change the face of the world.' Now, when Ulagou the Khan heard of these things he commanded that the lad should be carried, along with much treasure of the Khalif's and the pearl, to Samarkand, 'and see that the boy be nurtured royally along with mine own nephews until he shall come of age, for it is said of him that his coming shall change the face of the world.'

Now when Khalid was come to man's estate, the world was darkened upon him, and all joy of his life departed far from him because of his home and the land of his birth. And he said within himself: 'Nought is there in gold and silver that maketh him rich who is constrained to sojourn in a far country, nor aught that maketh happy in feasting and fine linen and hawks and hounds and horses and fair women when all faces are strange and the faces of them that have mastery over him. Verily, bitter is the bread to me of them that slew my kindred, and their wine is as the poison of adders on my lips. Yea, the friendship of this people is deadly, and their kindness a knitting-up of sorrows. Am I a dog that I should be beholden to the idolater, and endure prosperity as a gift from the accursed of the Merciful?'

And he rose up by night and put on him the garments of a camel-driver, and fled forth of the city so that no man was ware of his departure until the morning, and none of his household knew whither he was fled. And the Great Khan sent soldiers and smote off the head of the chief groom of the chambers, 'for,' said he, 'his life which was bought with the pearl was on mine own head, and the pearl is mine, and haply now when he goeth about to do great deeds they shall be not for us, but against us.'

Howbeit Khalid went forth and journeyed through Khorassan and many lands until he came unto his father's house in Rusafeh of Baghdad, east of the Tigris. And the whole quarter was desolate and in ruins, and the ruins of the chambers, with their fine latticework of marble and many arches curiously wrought, and walls painted with pictures, the works of wise master craftsmen,

were nought but the dwelling places of owls and unclean birds and vampyres; and under the young trees the lynx and the leopard and the other great wild cat prowled about the great halls and courtyards and gardens. And when he came into the Court of the Seven Fountains, the green weeds had grown all along the joinings of the pavements, and had lifted the quarrels of jasper and sardonyx and agate from their places, and on the brink of the great basin were many pelicans roosting.

And Khalid went up into the city and bought him a little pulse for food and came back to his father's house, and drove out the pelicans and slept in the Court of the Seven Fountains that night, making fast the doors with stones and great branches of trees against the cats and wild beasts. And he performed the ablution and stood up and bowed and prostrated himself and prayed: 'O, Thou One Merciful, behold me the least and least worthy of all them that Thou hast created to Thy glory, and grant that my coming may change the face of the world swiftly, for verily Thou seest it is needful that a change should be wrought.' And seven times in the night he rose and repeated the same prayer with groaning and lamentation, and the tears streamed from his eyes, even as the stream that flowed from the Seven Fountains.

And a little before the dawn he rose again, and when he saw the sun he prostrated himself and prayed the same prayer. And while he was praying very instantly, he felt on his eyes that were shut a shadow betwixt him and the shining of the sun, and heard a voice calling him by name: 'Khalid ben Shemseddin!'

And when he opened his eyes he saw standing before him an old man of five-score years or more, as it were a Sheykh of the Bedaween, and the turban upon his head was of green samite. And Khalid was sore abashed, for all the doors were made fast with the stones and branches, neither was there any way whereby a man should have come into the Court. And he said: 'Peace be upon thee, O brother of my father's father; how is it thou hast known the name of thy servant, for of these twelve years hath no man called me thereby?' And the Old Man made answer: 'I have known thee, O Khalid, from the day thy mother bore thee to thy father Shemseddin. And I know that no man hath called thee by thy right name, lo, these twelve years, for they of Samarkand have named thee the Ransomed of the Pearl. Now, therefore, take this pearl, which is thy life, into thy hand and fare forthwith to the great Island Teffrobany, which is Serendib, and seek out

the Mountain of Adam and the Valley of Elephants, wherein thou shalt find the Cavern of the Great Death. And when thou comest to the brink of the pit in the third chamber, cast thy pearl thereinto without fear. And if any shall question thee, thou shalt make this answer to him and none other: "Thirty and six thousand thousand." And thereafter hath the One Merciful granted thee this thy prayer, that thy coming may change the face of the world. For this is thy destiny that is henceforth written on thy forehead, even as it is written in the Book of the Everlasting Will. Peace !'

And Khalid bowed his head before the Old Man and took the pearl, and saw that it was the pearl which had been found in the hand of the counter of heads. And he looked up whereas the sky was still on flame with the morning, and in the midst of the flame was a glitter of blue for the space of a moment, as when the kingfisher flitteth from the river to her nest; but the Old Man was not to be seen. And Khalid said: 'Glory and praise to Thee, O Merciful, for of a surety this was Thy angel that spake with me but now, and the desire of mine eyes shall be accomplished.'

Now Khalid bethought him how, in the day of desolation, Shemseddin his father had called all of his sons, with Khalid, his youngest born, into the garden, and said unto them: 'All we are of God and unto God we return, but if it should chance so that I be slain of these Satans that are come as locusts into the land, then let him that surviveth dig three paces eastward from this juniper-tree, and he shall find that which peradventure shall be of profit.' And Khalid stepped three paces eastward from the juniper-tree, which was all brown and dry, and fell to digging away the weeds and the soil. And presently he lighted on a square stone with an iron ring therein, and, lifting the stone, he found steps leading down to a chamber in the rock, wherein were many chests of cypress and sandal-wood and cedar, and in the chests was great store of gold and silver and precious stones, and rich garments of silk and fine linen, which the moth had not wasted because of the bitter savour of the wood. And he took one of the chests and filled it with rich stuffs, and at nightfall he clad himself so as might beseem a son of the merchants bound for a journey, and the weight of his girdle was as the chain of a captive for the gold pieces that were therein, and within his turban were knotted many parcels of diamonds and emeralds, for that such stones be of most price in the Island of Teffrobany.

And when it was quite dark he carried the chest on his

shoulder to the river, where were many boats, and choosing one, he placed the chest therein and loosed the boat from the moorings and let it drift, steering it with a paddle, for he was cunning of boat-craft. And when the sky began to wax light in the morning he drifted by a village many leagues below the city, and saw a fisherman bearing paddles and a net, who walked slowly on the bank of the river, and he called aloud to him saying, 'Ho, thou son and grandson of calamity, what trick is this that thou hast played me in the night? Didst thou not agree with me for five dinars to bring me with speed to Bassorah, that I might do the bidding of the Great Khan? And now, behold, thou hast fled from me while I slept, so that but for the mercy of the Merciful I had been drowned or ever mine errand be accomplished.'

And the fisherman answered, 'Peace on thee, O my lord! Thy servant knoweth nought of any such thing as this whereof thou speakest, for never saw he thee nor thy boat till this moment which God giveth us.'

And Khalid said: 'A likely man art thou and a devout, and thou wilt not remember the word I spake against thee even now, taking thee belike for another. But come now on board of my boat and bring me in all haste to Bassorah, and I will give thee the double of that I thought to give unto another.' So the man agreed with him gladly for ten dinars, for since the day of desolation he had earned scarce so many dirhems by the space of a month.

And when Khalid had come safely to Bassorah he found a great ship ready for sea, and therein many rich merchants, whereof some were bound for the Island of Teffrobany. And the fisherman who had steered the boat down the great river brought his chest on board of the ship, and the sons of the merchants asked of him, 'Who is thy lord?' And he made answer, 'His name I know not, but this know I, that he hath bestowed more treasure in this chest than ever had Kai Khosrou, and he is a messenger from the Khan of Khans to the King of Teffrobany. And ye shall be witnesses if God will that the ivory and jewels he shall bring back with him shall fill all this great ship, and, belike, another as great.'

And on the tenth of the month Sepher, the ship, whereof the name was the *Cinnamon Tree of the Golden Leaves*, set sail with a fair wind from Bassorah down the Gulf of Fars, and came to the city of Ormuz about the end of harvest. And there they abode fifteen days before they sailed into the Great Sea by the

coast of Chesmacoram and the mouths of the river Sind to Semenat, and thence on to Tanah in safety, seeing no ships of the pirates that have given an evil name to all the coasts of Sind. And from Tanah by the coast of Melibar, which is called by the Indians Cherala, they came to Colum and on to Cape Comari, whence they turned north-eastward into the Sea of Herkend and that which the merchants call the Gulf of Gain, for that therein be the fisheries of pearls, and there saw they many mermaids with much hair on their faces. Then coasted they past the Island of Manaar and the sand-reefs that are named the Bridge of Adam, for that after the years of his penance the Father of Men did thereby pass from the Island of Teffrobany to the mainland of Hind and thence to the mountains of Arafat, above Mecca, where he found again Eve his wife. And from thence they steered with a steady wind southward along the coast of Teffrobany as far as the river of Kaliyani, where is a new temple of the idolaters' building, and at the mouth of the river is the haven mostly affected of pilgrims from the west to the Mountain of Adam. And Khalid and seven other of the merchants left the ship here, for the rest were bound to the nether East and the city of Cambalu, and voyaged in a flat boat up the river of Kaliyani past Sita-wakka and the Fortress of the Sands of Gold as far as the feet of the hills over against the Mountain of Adam, where they found a rest-house the name whereof is Gangolla. And after they had refreshed themselves, the seven other pilgrims were minded to abide there till the evening, but Khalid set forth alone on foot, anointing himself with the juice of limes because of the bloodsuckers, for so many grasshoppers as there be in the dry places so many bloodsuckers be there in the places that are moist, for the many trees that hang over the pathways. And the way to Al-rahoun, which is the Mountain of Adam, lies for the most part through thick forest, wherein are hairy men and panthers and wild boars and many elephants, and great apes with white beards, and winged foxes, and peacocks and all manner marvellous fowl, and in the rivers and marshes are many crocodiles and great lizards and snakes. And it is a marvel of that island that there is no beast, be he never so big and terrible, but when he heareth so much as the footfall of a pilgrim of any of the religions he will incontinent turn and flee into the forest, insomuch that the peril of a panther or wild boar is less than of a bloodsucker the length of a little finger-joint, and of an elephant less than of a gnat.

And Khalid came to a watercourse wherein was a small stream

running of pure water, and the sand thereof was all of precious stones, as of rubies and sapphires, and topazes and garnets, and star-rubies and amethysts, and cinnamon-stones and moonstones. And Khalid made search along the watercourse, for he came of the blood of them that can tell certainly precious gems from crystals by the water thereof, if haply he might find choice stones for an offering at the hallow. And he found one as big as a peahen's egg, whereof the one part was of ruby and the other part of sapphire, beside many others, mostly rounded by the washing of the stones in the watercourse, but some with their corners whole, yet for price were there none like unto the diamonds and emeralds that were knotted in his turban.

And he praised the One worthy of praise and went on his way, and as he journeyed upwards of the hill he came into a great forest of trees whereof the leaves are always green, tall trees full of bloom as it were of roses, and every herb that grew under and over was as it were a treasury of great flowers, white and of many colours, as the flowers of imbul and datura and of Asoka and four-score more beside. And Khalid said : 'Behold, the flowers are the gems of the green trees and herbs, and the gems are the flowers of the mountains and the rocks. And the beauty of the one is the beauty of a day, and the beauty of the other is the beauty of a thousand thousand years. Yet the ruby is not fairer than the rose when she is in flower, and the beauty of both is of God. Blessed be He to whom the lifetime of the ruby is as the lifetime of the rose.'

And he took of the roses and other and set them with the gems he had gathered for an offering at the hallow. And going down into a steep valley he came to another water flowing swiftly over smooth great stones, as it were the courtyard of a castle, wherethrough having waded by the grace of God he came to a sheer wall of rock, wherein were seven caves, and without was a little wooden temple of the idolaters, and beyond was a strait passage cut in the rock, with steps each a cubit or more in height and much worn by the feet of pilgrims, so that to climb them was sore weariness. And presently he came to a place where were no more trees nor herbs, which is called the Ridge of Iskender, for that Iskender Dhoulkernein and Bolinus, the great philosopher, were the first to scale the higher mountain beyond, by driving great iron pins into the live rock and fixing thereunto ten chains of brass and iron very strong, and therewithal cutting certain foot-holds in the rock, made shift to reach to the summit. And the

last of the ten chains is called to this day the Chain of Witness, for that no man save he be stout of heart durst lay hold thereon for the giddiness of the height. And at the foot of the chain is a little house that is also named of Iskender, and therein did Khalid repeat his devotions or ever he assayed to lay hold upon the chain.

And when he had prayed he took the chain in his hands and climbed up the pillar of rock, and when he came to the top he rendered thanks to God, lying prostrate of a long space, for that all his limbs were as water for the peril of the chains and the giddiness that gat hold upon him for the swaying thereof.

And when he was come to himself he stood up and saw a great baldachin, richly embroidered with fringes, stretched on eight pillars twisted of brass, set in sockets of brass, on a breast-work of reddish stone, wherein was an open doorway, and the path to the doorway was hollowed out as it were a water-course with the treading of many pilgrims. And he looked in at the doorway, and on the floor of the rock under the baldachin was a great golden lid, about the bigness of a man for length and breadth, with hinges and hasps of gold and a golden lock. And between two of the brazen pillars was a great brazen bell, shapen like a timbrel, whereon the pilgrims smite with a wooden stick. And about a leopard's leap away from the inclosure with the baldachin, which is called the Tent of the Footstep, was a little chamber, builded of stone and pargeted within with smooth plaster, and without was a court not three paces square, with a low wall. And on the other side of the Tent of the Footstep was a well, with seven steps down into a clear pool, the water whereof they say is of the tears of Adam which he shed in the years of his penance.

And when Khalid had marvelled at the fashion of these things he looked out over the land and saw the mountains one beyond another, and the forests red with roses and green with many leaves in the valleys at his feet, and the rivers as it were of molten silver, and the great water tanks, and far off the sea shining as the gold of Ophir, beyond the plain country and the broad channels which are between the flat meadows and the hem of palm trees on the shore; for from the Mountain of Adam a man may see more of the world created by the Merciful, and the glory and the beauty thereof, than from the topmost pinnacle of the Rooftree of the World.

And behold, when he turned from looking at the mountains and the forests, he saw on the wall of the little courtyard, sitting

astride thereon as it had been the saddle of a horse, and looking forth eastward over his shoulder, an old man—a religious—who dwelt on the top of the rock to receive the offerings of the Faithful.

And Khalid said, 'Peace be upon thee, O brother of my father.' And the old man arose and saluted him, and brought him into the Tent of the Footstep, and knelt down and unlocked the lid of gold above the foot-print of Adam. And Khalid saw the foot-print, more than three cubits in length, in the living rock, and kneeling down over against the old man laid therein reverently the offerings he had brought of flowers and of precious stones, both them that he had gathered in the water-course and them that he had carried knotted in his turban from Baghdad. And he cried aloud, 'Saadoo! Saadoo! So mote it be!' and smote upon the bell, and going down to the well drank water of the tears of Adam.

Now when the old man saw the offerings, he knew that they were such as it might beseem King Solomon the Wise or any other the richest king of the kings of the earth to offer. And he joined himself again unto Khalid and looked steadfastly upon him of a long space, shading his eyes with his hand, and presently he spake: 'Peace upon thee, my son, and the blessing of God, for it is written on thy forehead that thy coming shall change the face of the world. Saadoo! So mote it be!'

And Khalid said: 'Blessing on thee and great peace on them that went before thee! By what name shall I speak unto mine uncle?' And the old man answered: 'Men call me the Pilgrim of the World, Hadji Abou Housseyn, for betwixt this and El Granat of the Moors is no hallow of the Prophet, on whom be peace, nor of any famous holy man of the Faith, whereat I have not paid my devotions. And if thou be journeying farther, haply I may be of help to thee, for that all the hidden ways of this island in the forest and the mountain are known to me of old.'

And Khalid said: 'I am bound to the Cavern of the Great Death, and the path thereunto lieth through the Valley of Elephants, but none of those with whom I have conversed knoweth aught of the way thither.' Then Abou Housseyn took thought awhile and presently he said: 'The Valley of Elephants know I well and the pathway thereunto, but the Cavern of the Great Death may no man attain unto before the appointed time, for that the Prophet, on whom be peace, hath ordained the Lord of the Elephants as the gateward thereof that no man should enter

therein nor issue out. Howbeit, for the sake of that which is written on thy forehead I will come with thee to the Valley, and haply the Prophet, on whom be peace, shall be thy guide beyond.'

And the twain came down the mountain together and set forth eastward toward the Valley of Dead Elephants. And when they had passed through much forest and many waters, they entered into the Valley through a strait cleft in the rocks; and behold it was all white with the bones of elephants, for it is one of the marvels of the island that whensoever any of the elephants knoweth that death is upon him, he forthwith betaketh himself to this Valley, neither may he yield up his ghost, for the elephant also is a creature of God, until he come within the cleft which is the gateway thereof. And it is so that the seekers of ivory for the merchants come at certain seasons into the valley and find great store of tusks, which they send down to the cities of the coast on the shoulders of wild men, whom they constrain to carry them.

And the twain journeyed together along the valley past a great narrow lake of clear water, wherein were no snakes nor crocodiles but only fishes such as come up out of the water to feed on the grasses that are by the side of the lake; for the bottom of the water is only red stones and gravel, and beyond the margent of grasses and reeds are great stones and rocks red and yellow, and the walls of the valley are sheer, cloven everywhere with a multitude of waterfalls, with a few trees and herbs growing along the courses of the waterfalls.

And when they had come to the end of the valley, Abou Housseyn said, 'Thus far have I journeyed aforetime, but the last part of the way to the Cavern of the Great Death is known to none save God and the Lord of the Elephants.' Then Khalid and Abou Housseyn prostrated themselves and rose up and prostrated themselves again, praying that the Merciful would discover to them the right way. And when they had made an end of praying, they lifted up their eyes, and behold there was walking before them an elephant of the elephants, very old, so that he might seem of a thousand years of age, white even as a leper is white, so that his skin was whiter than his tusks and glittering like hoar-frost in the sun, and above his left fore-foot was an anklet of beaten gold with signs and letters thereon. And the tread of the elephant as he walked waxed slower and slower, and they saw that he was forspent with travail and the length of the

days of his life. And he came thus into a little open space where the rock of the mountain had been shapen with chisels as it were the bulwark of a great city, and in the midst thereof was a tall gateway, square at the top where it was narrower, and letters carven on the left-hand side and above the gateway. And the lower part was all full of great trees, hung about as it were with many chains with creeping plants in flower, so as that it seemed no man could enter in thereat. And the old elephant walked close by the wall and came as nigh the gateway as he might for the trees, and then he stood still and leant somewhat slant-wise against the wall. And he groaned once, and a shudder went over him like the passing of the wind of sun-down over a still water. And Abou Housseyn said : 'Blessed be He who hath created all living things and again taketh their life unto Himself, for now have we twain seen die the goodliest and most royal of His four-footed creatures.'

And they waited awhile and marvelled at the stateliness of the beast, for he was twenty cubits in height, so that a man might stand under his belly, and he seemed an image carven in the whitest marble of the world. And Khalid wept and said : 'Yesterday were we born and to-morrow we die, yet the life seemeth a great thing. This Lord of the Elephants hath lived haply for a thousand years, yet are they all but as a day that is spent, and his presence hath gone away from his haunts in the valley even as the shadow of a cloud. Blessed be He that surviveth all things He hath created.'

And they drew nigh, and Abou Housseyn kneeled down and read the words that were written on the anklet of gold : 'I am the Elephant of the Prophet, whom he made Gateward of the Womb of the Great Death, that none should enter in thereat nor issue thence until the appointed time. Peace.'

And Abou Housseyn said : 'Of a surety this gateway is the gateway of the Cavern of the Great Death.' And he read the writing to the left hand of the gateway : 'Let him whose coming shall change the face of the world enter alone.' And over the gateway were the words, 'Beyond the third chamber is the Womb of the Great Death.' And Abou Housseyn said : 'Go thou in with the blessing of the Merciful, and I will abide without and await thy coming.' And they sought about for a way whereby to enter the gateway, and after much searching they found a hole whereby it seemed wild beasts passed to and fro, for the floor thereof was beaten hard and the bark of the roots of the trees had

been worn away, and there were tufts of hair on the thorns of the branches and great knees of the roots and the lesser twigs were all broken and twisted and bare of leaves. And Khalid crept in upon his hands and knees as he had been a four-footed thing, and Abou Housseyn abode without.

And when Khalid came into the cavern whereas he could stand upright a rout of panthers ran out with much snarling and muffled beating of feet. And after that they were fled it seemed the air was all quick with an innumerable company of bats and vampyres and flying beasts, both great and small, so that their wings baffled against his face and he could scarce lift his hand without smiting against some live thing. But they did him no hurt for that he was a pilgrim, and after a time the most part fled back into their holes, and Khalid could see darkly the fashion of the cavern whereinto he had come. And it was all of white stone as it were wax that had been molten, for the stone had dripped down from above as it were in great icicles, some thick and others slender, so that the chamber wherein he stood was as a halting-place under a great banyan-tree with a thousand stems channelled and knotted wrought in white marble, and some part the colour of pale roses, like the cheek of a Circassian slave-girl. And the stone had dripped upon the floor, so that where the stems of the tree were not whole a part of the stem hung down from above and a part rose up from below, and the lower parts were shapen, some like to thrones and footstools and other some to great mushrooms, and two or three were even as little children of the Mountain of Adam. And the roof was all in great arches and coves higher than the arches of any temple, and the topmost part Khalid could not see for the darkness of the cavern, but it seemed all cloudy and wavering, with the bats and creeping things and insects whereof the hollows of the arches were full. And while he looked about him as it were in a twilight, he perceived a low, square doorway cut with chisels in the farther side of the chamber, and beyond the doorway he found a second chamber all dark save for the shining of manifold stars in the walls and roof thereof—yellow and red and blue and purple—like the glimmering of lanterns at the Feast of Lanterns in the nether East when a mist is on the river. And Khalid looked narrowly and felt the lights with his hand, and found that they were precious stones, as rubies and amethysts for the most part, growing as it were on the face of the mother-rock. And he marvelled greatly, and praised God who bestoweth His treasure as He will without regard of any man's

estimation. And while he was musing he perceived in the farther wall a low space where were no stars nor any light, and he felt and found that it was the mouth of a low, strait passage where-through he could scarce creep upon his hands and knees. And when he came into the third chamber he stood upright, and gave thanks to God who hath created the darkness and night without light in the caverns even at noonday. Then he stooped down again and crept forward very heedfully, feeling with his hands along the floor of the cavern. And he was as one that is stone-blind for the blackness of the darkness, and as one that is stone-deaf for the stillness of the silence, and a dread was upon him such as that he durst not so much as pray aloud, but only spake within his heart: 'Be merciful, O Thou Merciful One, be merciful!'

And as he crept forward warily, he felt that he came to the brink of a pit, and he knew that the pit was the Womb of the Great Death. Whereupon he took the pearl which was his life in his hand, and stretched forth his arm beyond the brink of the pit, and spake in a low voice: 'In the name of the Prophet and the One!' Therewith he let the pearl drop, and after a time he heard it slip into a water as it were a thousand cubits below. And straightway came up a voice from the gulf that smote upon his face and ears as it were a living thing, saying: 'How many is the full tale, O Khalid ben Shemseddin?' And Khalid answered aloud: 'Thirty and six thousand thousand, O dweller in the Deep.'

And the Voice made answer: 'Well hast thou spoken, O Khalid ben Shemseddin, for in an hour there be six spaces of time, and for every space in every hour hath the Merciful granted unto me to take the life of a man. And now behold, from the days of the Prophet, on whom be peace, at whose bidding was I cast aforetime into the abyss, are seven hundred years. The life of a man for every space in every hour of every day in every month of every year in all these seven hundred years shall I turn to death or ever I return unto this darkness of the Pit.'

And the hair upon Khalid's head was lifted even as the corn is lifted when the wind ceaseth suddenly, and the sweat dropped from his eyebrows into the pit, and his voice seemed unto himself as it were the voice of another man by then he spake again: 'Art thou, then, the Destroyer of Mankind?' And the Voice answered: 'Nay! The Destroyer of Mankind is the angel of the Most Highest. Myself am but the Slave of the Destroyer. And among the angels am I known as the Seventh Avenger of the Law, but among men am I named the Great Death, Pestilence, Plague, and

the Black Plague in a thousand tongues.' Then the Voice cried downward of the pit: 'Come forth, O my Sister, O my Bride, to the light; for the nights of our darkness are accomplished, and the appointed days have dawned.'

And Khalid felt a cold wind rushing upward from the pit, and somewhat smote him on the cheek and brushed past as it were a spider's web when the hoar frost abideth thereon, and he knew that the Plague and the Sister of the Plague had come forth of the pit, and were already betwixt him and the gateways of the Cavern.

And the Voice spake again above him and behind him: 'O Khalid ben Shemseddin, thy life hath been granted thee as at this time because of the pearl. And at the end of threescore years and ten from this day shalt thou meet us again in this place, for so long hath it been given unto us to go to and fro upon the earth that we may change the face thereof according to thy prayer.'

And Khalid swooned away for dread of the words he had heard, and his life was as death by the space of seven days and seven nights. And when he began to come to himself, it seemed unto him that he had been stricken with blindness for the darkness that was about him, and thereafter the things that had been came back to him, and the fear thereof gat hold upon him and he prayed again: 'Have mercy, O Thou One Merciful, have mercy!'

And after a time he made shift to creep back to the Chamber of Precious Stones and thence to the outer chamber of the Cavern, wherein was Abou Housseyn searching if haply he might find his dead body, for after three days he had made certain that Khalid was dead. And Khalid spake very low as one that whispereth for dread: 'Peace be unto thee!' And Abou Housseyn looked upon him and answered: 'Peace be unto thee also, my brother.' And Abou Housseyn was in great fear, knowing not who spake unto him, for Khalid's hair was white as snow for the dismay and sorrow, and his voice was the voice of one full of years and sick unto the death. And Khalid said: 'Dost thou not know me? Khalid ben Shemseddin was I and the Ransomed of the Pearl when I came into this cavern, but henceforth let no man call me by any name save only the Despair of the World; for I thought to change the face of the world with blessing, and lo! my coming shall change the face of the world with a curse.'

And he told Abou Housseyn all that had passed at the Womb of the Great Death. And Abou Housseyn said: 'O my son, keep

watch upon thy lips that thou blaspheme not the mercy of the One Merciful, for of no earthly good nor evil can any son of man tell whether it be a blessing or a curse. Blessed be He who alone knoweth His own secret counsel.'

And Khalid groaned and said: 'I thought to have brought back justice and peace to my brethren who suffer and sin, to have stablished the people in righteousness, and made glad their hearts with love; and now, behold, my coming hath clothed them with calamity as with a garment, and multiplied death upon all the nations of the earth.'

And Abou Housseyn tended him even as a mother tendeth her only son for many days, giving him to eat of plantains and ripe fruits and to drink of water of a well of healing waters nigh the mouth of the Cavern. And when he was strong, the twain journeyed back together to the top of the Mountain of Adam. And Abou Housseyn unlocked the golden lid which was above the footprint of Adam, and behold, the rubies and precious stones which Khalid had placed therein were gone, but the roses were not withered, neither had the leaves lost their freshness, and when Khalid took them out of the footprint there lay beneath them the Pearl that was his life, which he had cast into the Womb of the Great Death. And they marvelled greatly, and Abou Housseyn said: 'Praise be to the One to be praised! Thine offering hath been accepted, and thy coming shall change the face of the world for blessing rather than for cursing;' and he put back the flowers into the footprint saying, 'The sign hereof shall be that thy flowers shall not perish, nor their freshness be withered, until thou hast known the mercy of the One Merciful.'

And they abode on the top of the mountain, and on a certain night after they had prayed they laid them down to sleep on the floor of the little house. And at midnight Khalid awoke, hearing sweet voices in the little house, and he looked but he saw nought, for the moon was sitting. But he heard a voice saying: 'By what gate, O servant of God, wilt thou come into the presence of thy Lord?' And Abou Housseyn made answer: 'If it be the will of thy Lord and mine, O Angel of God, let me go to-morrow to the valley where the Elephant of elephants is still standing as he died, and while I am yet prostrate in prayer at eventide, let the Great Death smite me there. Haply so shall this my brother be lightened somewhat of his burden of sorrow, for that his coming hath loosed the Great Death to do Thy bidding.' And the voice answered: 'Saadoo! So mote it be!' And Khalid heard no

more of the voice, neither saw he aught, but lay marvelling until the hour of morning prayer.

And after they had broken their fast, Abou Housseyn brought to Khalid the key of the golden cover and said: 'Take this key and abide thou here to receive the offerings of the pilgrims; for this day must I go into the Valley of Elephants, that the Great Death which thy coming hath loosed may meet me there and open unto me the door of blessing. Yea, unto all the Faithful that shall pass into peace through the gateways of the Great Death shall thy coming be blessed for ever. Peace upon thee, O my brother, and farewell!'

And Khalid said: 'Cold is this comfort, O my brother, that death shall open the gates of blessing to the dead! I had hoped that at my coming life should set wide the gates of blessing to the living, and behold my hope hath been turned to despair. Yea, my coming hath been thy death, and I shall see thy face no more.' And they wept together and embraced each other tenderly, and Abou Housseyn went down into the Valley of Elephants, and died there as it was granted unto him; and Khalid abode alone upon the mountain.

Now many pilgrims resorted to the mountain from all parts of the world, for that Adam the first father of us all was the one man that once was all mankind, the greatest of the Patriarchs and Prophets, and the first Vicar of God upon earth. And the most marvel of the island is this, that the pilgrims of all the religions that be in the world shall there company together in peace, and each man shall show other courtesy as of kind, seeing that all men be children of the household of Adam. For of the pilgrims, whereas some be of the Faithful, yet are many of them of the Jews and of the Nazarenes of both kinds, whereof the one sort worship the great spirit Kalapataraoth as the patron of the hallow, and the other Mary, mother of Eesa, on both whom be peace; and other some of the pilgrims be Fire-Worshippers of Fars; and other some Brahmins, who hold that the footprint is the footprint of one of their gods whose name is Siva; and others idolaters who say that this is the footprint of one Sakhya Mouni, the which was minded to dwell on the top of the mountain because of the evil customs that are in the world, as that oftentimes a son shall die before his father, and that when one hath learnt all knowledge and wisdom, and is able to speak and to govern, then it is all as nought, for that his wisdom goeth down with him to the grave, and men stop his mouth with a clod.

And Khalid opened the golden lid unto all of them that would, and received their offerings, for that all men be sons of our first father Adam. And many of the pilgrims held converse with him, and told him how the Great Death had passed over the lands whence they came both to the East and to the West. And one should bless the Pestilence for that it had slain the usurper of his patrimony, and a second should bless the Plague for that it had cut off an unjust Vizier that grievously oppressed the people with new taxes, and a third should bless the Black Plague for that it had smitten the king of his country that was a tyrant and a slayer of men. And many years went by, and scarce a month passed but one or other of the pilgrims should call a blessing on the Great Death by the name whereby it was known in his country. For the hearts of many had been thereby turned to righteousness, and many gave great alms and builded lodges and lazарhouses for them that were stricken, and pulled down the cabins of them of the poorer sort that had died, in such wise that many cities were builded anew fairer than before with baths and resthouses and mosques and temples. And half the allotted time went by, and Khalid said : 'Thirty and five years have I dwelt upon this mountain, and now have I learnt of a truth that there is no blessing sent upon the world to change the face of the world that is all a blessing, neither any curse that is all a curse. Blessed be He that sendeth alike the blessing and the curse.'

And the years followed one upon another, and Khalid abode still upon the Mountain of Adam and received the offerings of the pilgrims. And when he had dwelt there threescore years and ten save one day, there came a pilgrim to the mountain as it were his brother, for he was very old, of five-score years or more as it seemed, in habit as a Sheykh of the Bedaween and wearing a green turban on his head. And he laid hold on the Chain of Witness and set his feet in the footholds of the rock nimbly, as he were a young man, and when he came up to the top, he prostrated himself thrice and stood up before Khalid and said : 'Peace be upon thee, O Khalid ben Shemseddin, rememberest thou me?' And Khalid made answer : 'Peace on thee, O my Lord! It was thou that didst bring me the Pearl in the Court of Fountains in Rusafeh of Baghdad, and didst bid me come hither, for that my prayer had been heard.' And the Old Man said : 'Behold, thy prayer hath been answered, and thy coming hath changed the face of the world for blessing rather than for cursing, for he that now reigneth in Baghdad is wise and valiant and righteous, as was

never Ulagou the Great Khan, nor the Khalif El Mustazim Billah, who died miserably for all his much treasure. And the house that was thy father's house in Rusafeh hath been builded new for the palace of the ruler; and in the whole city of Baghdad is there no needy man nor any that is sick, for the Great Death hath done away all the feeble folk and them that had no pleasure of their life; and of the poorer sort such as have survived may earn easily a dinar for their labour, whereas they that went before them could scarce with much travail come by a dirhem, neither can the labourer be oppressed any more of any, for he that tilleth and toileth is he that hath lands and herds, and they that would oppress him have been brought low, for that they be few and feeble. For the Merciful One hath had mercy on the children of Adam, and hath changed the face of the world. Praise be to the One to be praised! And now take thy Pearl which is thy life into thy hand, and come with me to the Cavern of the Great Death, for I have a word to speak unto the Great Death or ever he return to the cavern from wandering to and fro upon the earth.'

And Khalid unlocked the lock and lifted the cover of the holy footprint, and behold, the roses which had remained fresh unto that day for threescore years and ten lay withered on the floor of the footprint, and he took his Pearl in his hand, and the twain went down together into the Valley of Elephants, where was the old elephant still standing as he died, and came into the Cavern of the Great Death. And there was a light brighter than the light of many lamps about the head of the Old Man, and his turban of green samite was as a great emerald held up against the sun. And they passed through into the third chamber where is the great pit, and stood upon the brink thereof, so that the light about the head of the Old Man shone far down into the pit.

And presently without noise came, as it were floating, into the chamber two, male and female, with long wings, like the wings of vampyres, trailing far behind them, very tall, and dark in colour as young elephants. And the twain bowed their heads before the Old Man and spake not, but covered their faces with their hands. And the Old Man spake: 'What is the full tale, O Seventh Avenger of the Law?' And the Great Death made answer: 'Thirty and six thousand thousand, O Angel of God.' And the Old Man said: 'What is this word that thou hast spoken? For behold they that have died in this the day of thy visitation are twice so many, to wit, threescore and twelve thousand thousand.' And the Great Death answered: 'O my Lord, thy slave hath

slain but six-and-thirty thousand thousand, as thou didst ordain, and as for the other six-and-thirty thousand thousand, they were slain, not by me, but by this my sister.'

And the Old Man said: 'By what name shall one speak unto thy sister?' And he answered: 'Among men my name is the Plague, and the name of this my sister is the Terror of the Plague, and whithersoever we go, so many as I slay she also slayeth.'

And the Old Man said: 'No commission hath thy sister from me to slay even a single one of all the children of men.' And the Plague answered: 'O my Lord, it is even so. For she holdeth her commission not of thee, as I, but of the One Merciful, who is thy Lord and ours. For when He flung Adam forth of Paradise, so that his foot lighted on the top of yonder mountain, He gave him Hope for an heritage, lest his life should be a burden heavier than he could bear. Yet such law hath the Almighty laid upon Himself that He could not give Hope unto the first man Adam and his children save He gave them also Fear as an inheritance for ever. And when He created myself, thy slave, the Seventh Avenger of the Law, He created also this Fear, which is my sister, to wait upon my footsteps. And now, O my lord, rebuke her not for that she hath slain even so many as thy slave, lest haply thou be found to question the will of the One Merciful.'

And the Old Man was silent a space; and he turned unto Khalid and said: 'The Merciful hath had mercy upon thee. Give me now thy Pearl into my hand.' And Khalid gave him the Pearl, and the Plague and the Terror of the Plague floated past them towards the pit, and as they passed the Terror of the Plague smote Khalid on the cheek with her wing, as it were with a spider's web whereon the hoar frost abideth.

And when Azrael laid the full tale of dead before the Lord, behold the Plague had slain thirty and six thousand thousand men, and the Terror of the Plague thirty and six thousand thousand men, and the one Man whose Coming had changed the Face of the World.

SEBASTIAN EVANS.

## *The Unbidden Guest.*

BY E. W. HORNUNG, AUTHOR OF 'TINY LUTTRELL,'  
 'A BRIDE FROM THE BUSH,' &c.

### CHAPTER XV.

#### A DAY OF RECKONING.

MISSY retreated a step from the verandah, stood still, and gasped. Then she pressed both hands to her left side. She was as one walking on the down line in order to avoid the up train, only to be cut to pieces by the down express, whose very existence she had forgotten.

Her eyes fastened themselves upon one object. Presently she found that it was Mrs. Teesdale's pebble brooch. Her ears rang with a harsh, shrill voice; it took her mind some moments to capture the words and grasp their meaning.

'You wicked, wicked, ungrateful woman! To dare to come here and pass yourself off as Miriam Oliver, and live with us all these weeks—you lying hussy! If you have anything to say for yourself be sharp and say it, then out you pack!'

The convicted girl now beheld the verandah swimming with people. As her sight cleared, however, she could only count four, including Mrs. Teesdale. There was the veritable Miss Oliver, but Missy took no stock of her just then. There was Arabella, white and weeping; and there was Mr. Teesdale, looking years older since the morning, with the saddest expression Missy had ever seen upon human countenance. He was gazing, not at her, but down upon the ground at her feet. John William was not there at all. Missy looked about for him very wistfully, but in vain; and her glance ended, where it had begun, upon the furious face of Mrs. Teesdale. Furious as it was, the wretched girl found it much the easiest face to meet with a firm lip and a brazen front.

'Do you know that you could be sent to prison?' Mrs. Teesdale proceeded, still at a scream. 'Ay, and I'll see that you are sent, and all!'

'Nay, come!' muttered Mr. Teesdale, shaking his head at the grass, but without looking at anybody.

Then suddenly he lifted his eyes, stepped down from the verandah, and went up to Missy.

'Missy,' said he, in a low, hoarse voice, 'Missy, I'll take your word as soon as the word of a person I've never set eyes on before. Is this true, or is it not? Are you, or are you not, Miriam Oliver, the daughter of my old friend?'

'It is true,' said Missy. 'I'm no more Miriam Oliver than you are.'

Neither question nor answer had reached the ears of those in the verandah. But they saw David turn towards them with his head hanging lower than before, and he tottered as he rejoined them. Miss Oliver, however, may have guessed what had passed, for she smiled a supercilious smile which no one happened to observe. This young lady was a contrast to her impersonator in every imaginable way. She was not nearly so tall, and she had exceedingly fair hair. Her nose was tip-tilted to begin with, but she seemed to have a habit of turning it up even beyond the design of nature. This was perhaps justified on the present occasion. She was very fashionably dressed in a costume of extremely light gray; and in the dilapidated framework of the old verandah she was by far the most incongruous figure upon the scene.

'Has she anything to say for herself?' Mrs. Teesdale demanded of her husband. He shook his head despondently.

And then, at last, Missy opened her mouth.

'I have only this to say for myself. It isn't much, but Mr. Teesdale will tell you that it's the truth. It's only that I did do my level best to make a clean breast to him last night.'

'She did!' exclaimed the old man, after a moment's rapid consideration. 'Now I see what she meant. To think that I never saw then!'

'You were very dense,' said Missy; 'but not worse than John William. I did my best to tell you last night, and I did my best to tell him only this morning, but neither of you would understand.'

As she spoke to the old man her voice was strangely gentle, and a smile was hovering about the corners of her mouth when

she ceased. Moreover, her words had brought out a faint ray of light upon Mr. Teesdale's dejected mien.

'It's a fact!' he cried, turning to the others. 'She did her best to confess last night. She *did* confess. I remember all about it now. It was a full confession, if only I'd put two and two together. But—well, I never could have believed it of her. That was it!'

He finished on a sufficiently reproachful note. Nevertheless, Mrs. Teesdale turned upon him as fiercely as though he had spoken from a brief in Missy's defence.

'What if she had confessed? I'm ashamed of you, David, going on as though that could ha' made any difference! She'd still have deceived us and lied to us all these weeks. Black is black, and this—this woman—is that black that God Himself couldn't whiten her!'

And Mrs. Teesdale shook her fist at the guilty girl.

'We have none of us a right to say that,' murmured David.

'But I do say it, and I mean it, too. I say that she'd still have stolen Miriam's letter of introduction, and come here deliberately and passed herself off as Miriam, and slept under our roof, and eaten our bread, under false pretences—false pretences as shall put her in prison if *I* have anything to do with it! No confession could have undone all that; and no confession shall keep her out of prison neither, not if *I* know it!'

Some of them were expecting Missy to take to her heels any moment; but she never showed the least sign of doing so.

'No, nothing can undo it,' she said herself. 'I've known that for some time, and I sha'n't be sorry to pay the cost.'

Then the real Miss Oliver put in her word. It was winged with a sneer.

'It was hardly a compliment,' she said, 'to take her for me! You might ask her, by the way, when and where she stole my letters. I lost several.' She could not permit herself to address the culprit direct.

'I'll tell you that,' said Missy, 'and everything else too, if you like to listen.'

'Do, Missy!' cried Arabella, speaking also for the first time. 'And then *I'll* tell *them* something.'

'Be sharp, then,' said Mrs. Teesdale. 'We're not going to stand here much longer listening to the likes of you. If you've got much to say, you'd better keep it for the magistrate!'

Missy shook her head at Arabella, stared briefly but boldly at

Mrs. Teesdale, and then addressed herself to the fair girl in gray, who raised her eyebrows at the liberty.

' You remember the morning after you landed in the *Parra-matta*? It was a very hot day, about a couple of months ago, but in the forenoon you went for a walk with a lady friend. And you took the Fitzroy Gardens on your way.'

Miss Oliver nodded, without thinking whom she was nodding to. This was because she had become very much interested all in a moment; the next, she regretted that nod, and set herself to listen with a fixed expression of disgust.

' You walked through the Fitzroy Gardens, you stopped to look at all the statues, and then you sat down on a seat. I saw you, because I was sitting on the next seat. You sat on that seat, and you took out some letters and read bits of them to your friend. I could hear your voices, but I couldn't hear what you were saying, and I didn't want to, either. I had my own things to think about, and they weren't very nice thinking, I can tell you! That hot morning, I remember, I was just wishing and praying to get out of Melbourne for good and all. And when I passed your seat after you'd left it, there were your letters lying under it on the gravel. I picked them up, and I looked up and down for you and your friend. You were out of sight, but I made for the entrance and waited for you there. Yes, I did—you may sneer as much as you like! But you never came, and when I went back to my lodgings I took your letters with me.'

Still the young lady sneered without speaking, and Missy hardened her heart.

' I read them every one,' she said defiantly. ' I had nothing to do with myself during the day, and very good reading they were! And in the afternoon, just for the lark of it, I took your letter of introduction, which was among the rest, and then I took the 'bus and came out here.'

She turned now to David, and continued in that softer voice which she could not help when speaking to him.

' It was only for the fun of it! I had no idea of ever coming out again. But you made so much of me, you were all so kind; and the place—it was heaven to a girl like me!'

Here she surprised them all, but one, by breaking down. Mr. Teesdale was not astonished. When she recovered her self-control it was to him she turned her swimming eyes; it was the look in his that enabled her to go on.

' If you knew what my life was!' she wailed; ' if you knew

how I hated it ! If you knew how I longed to come out into the country, when I saw what the country was like ! I had never seen your Australian country before. It was all new to me. I had only been a year out from home, but at home I lived all my life in London. My God, what a life ! But I never meant to come back to you—I said I wouldn't—and then I said you must take the consequences if I did. Even when I said good-bye to you, Mr. Teesdale, I never really thought of coming back ; so you see I repaid your kindness not only by lies, but by robbing you——'

She pulled herself up. David had glanced uneasily towards his wife. The girl understood.

'By robbing you of your peace of mind, for I said that I would come back, never meaning to at all. And now do you know why I was in such a hurry to get to the theatre ? Yes, it was because I had an engagement there. All the rest was lies. And I never should have come out to you again, only at last I saw in the *Argus* that she—that Miss Oliver—had gone to Sydney. Don't you remember how you'd seen it too ? Well, then I felt safe. I was only a ballet-girl ; I'd done better once, for at home I'd had a try in the halls. So I chuck'd it up and came out to you. I thought I should see in the *Argus* when Miss Oliver came back from Sydney, but somehow I've missed it. And now——'

She flung wide her arms, and raised her eyes, and looked from the sky overhead to the river-timber away down to the right, and from the river-timber to David Teesdale.

'And now you may put me in prison as fast as you like. I've been here two months. They're well worth twelve of hard labour, these last two months on this farm !'

She had finished.

Mrs. Teesdale turned to her husband. 'The brazen slut !' she cried. 'Not a word of penitence ! She doesn't care—not she ! To prison she shall go, and we'll see whether *that* makes her care.'

But David shook his head. 'No, no, my dear ! I will not have her sent to prison. What good could it do us or her ? Rather let her go away quietly, and may the Almighty forgive her—and—and make her——'

He looked down, and there was Missy on her knees to him. 'Can you forgive me ?' she cried passionately. 'Say that you forgive me, and then send me to prison or any place you like. Only say that *you* forgive me if you can.'

'I can,' said the old man softly, 'and I do. But I am not

the One. You shall not go to prison, but you must go away from us, and may God have mercy on you and help you to lead a better life hereafter. You—you have been very kind to me in little ways, Missy, and I shall try to think kindly of you too.'

He spoke with great emotion, and as he did so his trembling hand rested ever so lightly upon the red head from which the hat was tilted back. And the girl seized that kind, caressing hand, and raised it to her lips, but let it drop without allowing them to touch it. Then she rose and retreated under their eyes. And all the good women had been awed to silence by this leave-taking ; but one of them recovered herself in time to put a shot into the retiring enemy.

'Mr. Teesdale is a deal too lenient,' cried the farmer's wife. 'He's been like that all his life ! If I'd had my way, to prison you should have gone—to prison you should have gone, you shameless bad woman, you !'

Old David heard it without a word. He was seeing the last of Missy as she descended the paddock by the path that led down to the slip-rails ; the very last that he saw of her was the sunlight upon her hair and hat.

Arabella had darted into the house, and she now came out with a small bundle of things in her arms. With these she followed Missy, coming up with her at the slip-rails, against which she was leaning with her face buried in her hands.

Now this was the spot where Arabella had first met the man from whom this abandoned girl had rescued her, body and soul. She had desired to tell them all that story, to show them the good in Missy, and so make them less hard upon her. The person who had prevented her, by forbidding look and vigorous gesture, was Missy herself . . . .

It was half an hour later when Arabella returned to the house. This was what she was in time to see and hear.

The real Miss Oliver was sitting in the buggy beside the man in livery, replying, with chilly smiles and decided shakes of her fair head, to the joint remonstrances, exhortations, and persuasions of Mr. and Mrs. Teesdale, who were standing together on the near side of the buggy.

'But I've just made the tea this minute,' Arabella heard her mother complain. 'Surely you'll stop and have your tea with us after coming all this way ?'

'Thank you so much ; it is very kind of you ; but I promised to be back at the picnic in time for tea, and it is some miles away.'

'But Mrs. Teesdale takes a special pride in her tea,' said David, 'and she has made it, so that we shouldn't keep you waiting at all.'

'So kind of you; but I'm afraid I have stayed too long already. I was just waiting to say good-bye to Mrs. Teesdale. Good-bye again——'

'Come, Miriam,' said Mrs. T., a little testily, 'or we shall be offended!'

'I should be very sorry to offend you, I am sure, but really my friends lent me their buggy on the express condition——'

From her manner Mr. Teesdale saw that further pressing would be useless.

'We will let you go now,' said he, 'if you will come back and stay with us as long as you can.'

'For a month at least,' added Mrs. T.

Miss Oliver looked askance.

'We are such very old friends of your parents,' pleaded David.

'We would like to *be* your parents as long as you remain in Australia,' Mrs. Teesdale went so far as to say. And already her tone was genuinely kind and motherly, as it had never become towards poor Missy in all the past two months.

Miss Oliver raised her eyebrows; luckily they were so light that the grimace was less noticeable than it otherwise might have been.

'Suppose we write about it?' said she at length. 'Yes, that would be the best. I have several engagements, and I am only staying out a few weeks longer. But I will certainly come out and see you again if I can.'

'And stay with us?' said Mrs. T.

'And stay a night with you—if I can.'

'By this time,' exclaimed David, 'we might have had our tea and been done with it. Won't you think better of it and jump down now? Come, for your parents' sakes—I wish you would.'

'So do I, dear knows!' said Mrs. Teesdale wistfully.

But Miss Oliver, this time without speaking, shook her head more decidedly than ever; gave the old people a bow apiece worthy of Hyde Park; and drove off without troubling to notice the daughter of the house, who, however, was not thinking of her at all, but of Missy.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

## A MAN'S RESOLVE.

How to tell John William when he came home, that was the prime difficulty in the mind of Arabella. Tell him she must, as soon as ever he got in. She felt it of importance that he should hear the news first from herself, and not, for example, from their mother. But it was going to be a very disagreeable duty; more so, indeed, than she ever could have dreamt, until Missy herself warned her, almost with her last words, at the slip-rails. Missy had opened her eyes for her during those few final minutes. Till then she had suspected nothing between her brother and the girl. And now the case seemed so clear and so inevitable that her chief cause for wonderment lay in her own previous want of perception. It made her very nervous, however, with the news still to break to John William. She wished that he would make haste home. He had ridden off early in the afternoon to look up another young farmer several miles distant; not that he wanted to see anyone at all, but because he was ill at ease and anxious to be out of Missy's way, as Arabella now made sure. But poor Missy! And poor John William! Would they ever see each other again? She hoped not. Her heart grieved for them both, but she hoped not. No woman, being also a sister of the man concerned, could know about another woman what Arabella now knew against Missy, and hope otherwise. And the state of her own feelings in the matter was her uppermost trouble, when at last John William trotted his mare into the yard, and Arabella followed him into the stable.

Then and there she hurriedly told all. Her great dread was that their mother might appear on the scene and tell it in *her* way. But the attitude of the man greatly astonished Arabella. He took the news so coolly—but that was not it. He seemed not at all agitated to hear what Missy was, and who she was not, but very much so on learning how summarily she had been sent about her business. He said very little even then, but Arabella knew that he was trembling all over as he unsaddled the mare.

'My heart bled for the poor thing,' she added, speaking the simple truth. 'It would have bled even if she hadn't done more for me than ever I can tell anybody. I was thankful I went after her, and saw the last of her at the rails—'

‘Which way did she go?’

‘To the township to begin with; but she gave me——’

‘Which way did she mean to go—straight back to Melbourne?’

‘She didn’t say. I was going on to tell you that at the slip-rails she gave me some messages for you, John William.’

‘We will have them afterwards. Let us go in to supper now.’

‘Very well—but stay! Are you prepared for mother? She is dreadful about it; she makes it even worse than it is.’

‘I am prepared for anything. I shall not open my mouth.’

Nor did he; but the provocation was severe. Mrs. Teesdale was glad of an opportunity of rehearsing the whole story from beginning to end. This enabled her to decide what epithets were too weak for the occasion, and what names were as nearly bad enough for Missy as any that a respectable woman could lay her tongue to; also, by what she now said, this excellent woman strengthened her own rather recent convictions that she had ‘suspected something of the kind’ about Missy from the very first. Certainly she had felt a strong antipathetic instinct from the very first. Quite as certainly she had now just cause for righteous rage and desires the most vindictive. Yet there was not one of those three, her nearest, who did not feel a fresh spasm of pain at each violent word, because every one of them, save the wife and mother, had some secret cause to think softly of the godless girl who was gone, and to look back upon her more in pity than in blame.

For sadness, Mr. Teesdale was the saddest of them all. He crept to his bed a shaken old man, and had to listen to his wife until he thought she must break his heart. Meantime Arabella and John William forgathered in the latter’s room, and talked in whispers in order not to wake two old people who had neither of them closed an eye.

‘About those messages,’ said John William. ‘What were they?’

He was sitting on the edge of his bed, and he pared a cake of tobacco as he spoke. His wideawake lay on the quilt beside him, and he had not taken off his boots. Arabella stood uneasily.

‘Poor girl! she spoke about you a good deal just at the last.’

Arabella hesitated.

‘I want to know what she said,’ observed John William dryly.

‘Well, first she was sorry you weren’t there.’

‘If I had been she never should have gone like that!’

‘What, not when everything had come out——’

‘No, not at all; she shouldn’t have been kicked out, anyway. I’d have given her time and then driven her back to Melbourne, with all her things. What right have we with them, I should like to know?’

‘She wanted us to keep them, she——’

‘Wanted us! I’d have let her want, if I’d been here. However, go on. She was sorry I wasn’t there, was she?’

‘Well, at first she said so, but in a little while she told me that she was glad. And after that she said I didn’t know how glad she was for you never to set eyes on her again!’

‘Never’s a long time,’ muttered John William. ‘Did she explain herself?’ he added, as loud as they ventured to speak.

‘Y—yes.’ Arabella was hesitating.

‘Then out with it!’

‘She told me—it can’t be true, but yet she did tell me—that you—fancied yourself in love with her, John William!’

‘It isn’t true.’

‘Thank God for that!’

‘Stop a moment. Not so fast, my girl! It isn’t true—because there’s no fancy at all about it, d’ye see?’

Arabella saw. It was written and painted all over his lined yet glowing face; but where there could be least mistake about it was in his eyes. They were ablaze with love—with love for a woman who had neither name, honour, nor common purity. He could not know this. But Arabella knew all, and it was her business—nay, her solemn undertaking—to repeat all that she knew to John William.

‘I was told,’ she faltered, ‘what to say to you if you said that.’

‘Who told you?’

‘She did—Missy.’

‘Then say it right out.’

But that was difficult between brother and sister. At first he refused to understand, and then he refused to believe.

‘It’s a lie!’ he cried hoarsely. ‘I don’t believe a word of it!’

‘And do you suppose I would make it up? Upon my sacred honour, John William, it is only what she told me with her own——’

‘I know that; it’s *her* lie—I never meant it was yours. No, no, it’s Missy’s lie to choke me off. But it sha’n’t! No, by Heaven, and it shouldn’t if it were the living truth!’

There was no more to be said. The man knew that, and he relit the pipe, which he had scarcely tasted, without looking at the sister whom he had silenced. Presently he said in a perfectly passionless voice, coming back from the unspeakable to a point which it was possible to discuss :

'About those things of hers—all her clothes. Did you say that she wanted us to keep them? And if so, why?'

'Because,' said Arabella with some reluctance, 'they were bought with money which—as she said herself—she had obtained from father on false pretences.'

It may have been because he was now quite calm outwardly, but at this the man winced more visibly than at what had come out before.

'From father,' he repeated at length; 'he couldn't let her have much, anyway!'

'He let her have twenty pounds.'

'Never; the bank wouldn't let *him* have it.'

'The bank didn't; he got it on his watch.'

'On the watch that's—mending?'

The truth flashed across him before the words were out. Arabella nodded her head, and her brother bowed his in trouble.

'Yes, that's bad,' said he, as though nothing else had been. 'There's no denying it, that *is* bad.' It was a thing he could realise; that was why he took it thus disproportionately to heart.

'Surely it is all bad together!' said Arabella.

John William spent some minutes in a study of the bare boards by his bedside.

'Where do you think she went to?' he said at last, looking up.

'I have no idea.'

'Have you told me all that she said? She didn't—she didn't send any other messages?' It was wistfully asked.

'No, none; but she did tell me how she hopes and prays that you will never give her another thought. She declares she has never given a single thought to you. It is true, too, I am sure.'

'We shall see—we shall see. So you have no idea where she went? She gave you no hint of any sort or kind?'

'None whatever.'

'She has gone back to Melbourne, think you?'

'I don't know where else she could go to.'

'No more do I,' said John William, rising from the bed at

last. He opened the window softly and looked out into the night. 'No more do I see where else she could go to,' he whispered over again. Then he turned round to Arabella. She was watching him closely. Neither of them spoke. But John William picked his wideawake from off the bed and jammed it over his brows. Then he took a pair of spurs from the drawers-head and dropped them into his coat pocket. Then he faced Arabella afresh.

'Do you know what I am going to do?'

'I can guess. You are going to ride into Melbourne and look for Missy.'

'I am—and now, at once. I'm going out by that window. Don't shut it, because I shall be back before milking, and shall come in the same way I get out.'

'But you'll never see her, John William; you'll never see her,' said Arabella in misery. 'It'll be like hunting for a needle in a haystack!'

'You may always find the needle—there is always a chance. For me, if half of what she told you has a word of truth in it I shall have a better chance by night than by day. It can't be much after eleven now, and I guess I shall do it to-night in half an hour.'

'But if you don't see her?'

'Then I shall have another try to-morrow night—and another the next—and another the night after that. There are plenty of horses in the paddock; there are some that haven't been ridden this long time, and some that nobody can ride but me. The mare will have to sweat for it to-night, but not after to-night. Only look here. I shall be found out sooner or later, then there will be a row, and you know who'll make it. You'll let it be later, won't you, 'Bella, so far as you're concerned?'

'You must know that I will!'

'Then bless you, my dear, and good night.'

They had seldom kissed since they were little children. They were both of them over thirty now, in respect of mere years. But with his beard tickling the woman's cheek, the man whispered, 'You said that she had done something for you, too, you know!'

And the woman answered, 'Something more than I can ever tell any of you. You little know what I might have come to, but for Missy. Yet what are you to do with her, poor Jack, if you do find her?'

And the man said, 'Make her good again, so help me God!'

## CHAPTER XVII.

## THE TWO MIRIAMS.

A SUNDAY morning early in the following February; in fact, the first Sunday of the month.

It was, perhaps, the freshest and coolest morning of any kind that the hot young year had as yet brought forth. Nevertheless, neither Mr. nor Mrs. Teesdale had gone to chapel, as was their wont. For this Sabbath day was also one requiring a red letter in the calendar of the Teesdales, insomuch as it was the solitary entire day which a greatly honoured visitor over the week-end had consented, after much ill-bred importuning, to give to her father's old friends at the farm.

The visitor was gone to chapel with Arabella. But the farmer and his wife had stayed at home, the one to shoot a hare, and the other to cook it for the very special Sunday dinner which the occasion demanded.

Naturally David's part was soon performed, because the old man was a good shot still, and there were plenty of hares about the place. It was less natural in one of his serene disposition to light a pipe afterwards and sit down in the verandah expressly and deliberately to think of things which could only trouble him. This, however, was what he proceeded to do. And the things troubled him more and more the longer he allowed his mind to dwell upon them.

One thing was the whole miserable episode of Missy, of whom the old man could not possibly help thinking in that verandah.

Another was the manner and bearing of the proper Miriam, which was of the kind to make simple homely folk feel small and awkward.

A third thing was the difference between the two Miriams.

'She is not like her mother, and she certainly is not like her father—not as *I* knew him,' muttered David with reference to the real one. 'But she's exactly like her portrait in yon group. Put her in the sun, and you see it in a minute. She frowns just like that still. She has much the same expression whenever she isn't speaking to you or you aren't speaking to her. It isn't a kind expression, and I wish I never saw it. I wish it was more like—'

He ceased thinking so smoothly, for as a stone stars a pane of glass, that had shot into his mind's eye which made cross-roads of his thoughts. He took one of the roads and sat pulling at his pipe. Here from the verandah there was no view to be had of the river-timber and the distant ranges so beloved of the old man's gaze. But his eyes wandered down the paddock in front of the farmhouse, and thence to the township roofs, shifting from one to another of such as shone salient in the morning sun, and finally running up the parched and yellow hill upon the farther side. That way lay Melbourne, nine or ten miles to the south. And on this hill-top, between withered grass and dark blue sky, the old eyes rested; and the old lips kept clouding with tobacco-smoke the bit of striking sky-line, for the satisfaction of seeing it break through the cloud next instant; while on the worn face the passing flicker of a smile only showed the shadow of pain that was there all the time, until at length no more smoke came to soften the garish brilliance of the southern sky. Then David lowered his eyes and knocked the ashes out of his pipe. And presently he sighed a few syllables aloud :

‘ Ay, Missy ! Poor thing ! Poor girl ! ’

For on the top of that hill, between grass and sky, between puff and puff from his own pipe, a mammoth Missy had appeared in a vision to David Teesdale. Nor was it one Missy, but a whole set of her in a perfect sequence of visions. And this sort of thing was happening to the old man every day.

There was some reason for it. With all her badness the girl had certainly shown David personally a number of small attentions such as he had never experienced at any hands but hers. She had filled his pipe, and fetched his slippers, and taken his arm whenever they chanced to be side by side for half a dozen steps. His own daughter never dreamt of such things, unless asked to do them, which was rare. But Missy had done them continually and of her own accord. She had taken it into her own head to read to the old man every day ; she had listened to anything and all things he had to say to her, as Arabella had never listened in her life. Not that the daughter was at all uncommon in this respect ; the wife was just the same. The real Miriam, too, showed plainly enough to a sensitive eye that poor David's conversation interested her not in the least. So it was only Missy who was uncommon—in caring for anything that he had to say. And this led Mr. Teesdale to remember the little good in her, and doubtless to exaggerate it, without thinking

of the enormous evil; even so that when he did remember everything, the old man, for one, was still unable to think of the impostor without a certain lingering tenderness.

There kept continually recurring to him things that she had said, her way of saying them, the tones of her voice, the complete look and sound of her in complete little scenes that had actually taken place during her stay at the farm. Two such had been played all over again between the smoke of his pipe, the rim of yellow grass, and the background of blue sky which had formed the theatre of his thoughts. One of the two was the occasion of Missy's first blood-shedding with John William's gun. David recalled her sudden coming round the corner of the house —this corner. A whirlwind in a white dress, the flush of haste upon her face, the light of triumph in her eyes, the trail of the wind about her disorderly red hair. So had she come to him and thrown her victim at his feet as he sat where he was sitting now. And in a trice he had taken the triumph out of her by telling her what it was that she had shot, and why she ought not to have shot it at all. He could still see the look in her face as she gazed at her dead handiwork in the light of those candid remarks: first it was merely crestfallen, then it was ashamed, as her excitement subsided and she realised that she had done a cruel thing at best. She was not naturally cruel—a thousand trifles had proved her to be the very reverse. Her heart might be black by reason of her life, but by nature it was soft and kind. Kindness was something! It made up for some things, too.

Thus David would console himself, fetching his consolation from as far as you please. But even he could extract scant comfort from the other little incident which had come into his head. This was when Missy drank off Old Willie's whisky without the flicker of an eyelid; there has hitherto been no occasion to mention the matter, which was not more startling than many others which happened about the same time. Suffice it now to explain that Mr. Teesdale was in the habit of mixing every evening, and setting in safety on the kitchen mantelpiece, a pannikin of grog for Old Willie, who started townwards with the milk at two o'clock every morning. One fine evening Missy happened to see David prepare this potion, and asked what it was, getting as answer, 'Old Willie's medicine;' whereupon the girl took it up, smelt it, and drank it off before the horrified old gentleman had time to interfere. 'It's whisky!' he gasped. 'Good whisky, too,' replied Missy, smacking her lips. 'But it

was a stiff dose—I make it stiff so as to keep Old Willie from wanting any at the other end. You'd better be off to bed, Missy, before it makes you feel queer.' 'Queer!' cried Missy. 'One tot like that! Do you suppose I've never tasted whisky before?' And indeed she behaved a little better than usual during the remainder of the evening.

That alone should have aroused his suspicions—so David felt now. But at the time he had told nobody a word about the trick, and had passed it over in his own mind as one of the many 'habits and ways which were not the habits and ways of young girls in our day.' Their name had indeed been legion as applied to the perfumed pretender; that sentence in Mr. Oliver's letter, like the remark about 'modern mannerisms,' was fatally appropriate to *her*. Remained the question, how could those premonitory touches apply to a young lady so cultivated and so superior as the real Miriam Oliver?

It was a question which Mr. Teesdale found very difficult to answer; it was a question which was driven to the back of his brain, for the time being, by the return of the superior young lady herself, with Arabella, from the township chapel.

David jumped up and hurried out to meet them. Miss Oliver wore a look which he could not read, because it was the look of boredom, with which David was not familiar. He thought she was tired, and offered her his arm. She refused it with politeness and a perfunctory smile.

'I'm afraid you've had a very hot walk,' said the old man. 'Who preached, Arabella?'

'Mr. Appleton. Miss Oliver didn't think—'

'Ah! I thought he would!' cried David with enthusiasm. 'We're very proud of Mr. Appleton's sermons. It will be interesting to hear how he strikes a young lady—'

'She didn't think much of him,' Arabella went on to state with impersonal candour.

'Nay, come!' And Mr. Teesdale looked for contradiction to the young lady herself; but though the latter raised her eyebrows at Arabella's way of putting it, she did not mince matters in the least. Perhaps this was one of those ways or habits.

'It was better than I expected,' she said, with a small and languid smile.

'But didn't you like our minister, Miss Oliver? We all think so highly of him.'

'Oh, I am sure he is an excellent man, and what he said

seemed extremely well meant ; but one has heard all that before, over and over again, and rather better put.'

'Ah, at Home, no doubt. Yes ; I suppose you would now, in London. However,' added David, throwing up his chin in an attempt to look less snubbed than he felt as they came into the verandah, 'as long as you don't regret having gone ! That's the main thing—not the sermon. The prayers and the worship are of much more account, and I knew you'd enjoy them. Take this chair, Miss Oliver, and get cooled a bit before you go inside.'

Miss Oliver stopped short of saying what she thought of the prayers, which, indeed, had been mostly extemporised by the Rev. Mr. Appleton. But Arabella, had she not gone straight into the house, would have had something to say on this point, for Miss Oliver had been excessively frank with her on the way home, and she was nettled. It was odd how none of them save Mrs. Teesdale (who was not sensitive) thought of calling the real Miriam by her Christian name. That young lady had refused the chair, but she stood for a moment taking off her gloves.

'And why didn't you come to chapel, Mr. Teesdale ?' she asked, for something to say, simply.

'Aha !' said David slyly. 'That's tellings. I make a rule of going, and it's a rule I very seldom break ; but I'm afraid I broke it this morning—ay, and the Sabbath itself—I've broken that and all !'

Miss Miriam was a little too visibly unamused, because, with all her culture, she had omitted to cultivate the kind art of appreciation. She had never studied the gentle trick of keeping one's companions on good terms with themselves, and it did not come natural to her. So David was made to feel that he had said something foolish, and this led him into an unnecessary explanation.

'You see, in this country, in the hot weather, meat goes bad before you know where you are.'

This put up the backs of Miss Oliver's eyebrows to begin with.

'You can't keep a thing a day ; so, if I must tell you, I've been shooting a hare for our dinners. Mrs. T. is busy cooking it now. You see, if we'd hung it up even for a couple of hours—'

'Please don't go into particulars,' cried Miss Oliver, with a terrible face and much asperity of tone. 'There was no need for you to tell me at all. You dine late, then, on Sundays ?'

'No, early, just as usual ; it will be ready by the time you've got your things off.'

'What—the hare that you've only shot since we went out?'

'Why, to be sure.'

Miss Oliver went in to take off her things without another word. And David gathered from his guilty conscience that he had said what he had no call to say, what it was bad taste to say, what nobody but a very ill-bred old man would have dreamt of saying; but presently he knew it to his cost.

For nothing would induce the visitor to touch that hare, though Mrs. Teesdale had cooked it with her own hands. She had to say so herself, but Miss Miriam steadily shook her head; nor did there appear to be much use in pressing her. Mrs. Teesdale only made matters worse by so doing. But it is impossible not to sympathise with Mrs. Teesdale. She was by no means so strong a woman as her manifold and varied exertions would have led one to suppose. A hot two hours in the kitchen had left their mark upon her, and being tired at all events, if not in secret bodily pain, she very quickly became angry also. There was, in fact, every prospect of a scene, when David interposed and took the entire blame for having divulged to Miss Oliver the all too modern history of the hare. Then Mrs. Teesdale *was* angry, but only with her husband. With Miriam she proceeded to sympathise from that instant; indeed, she had set herself to make much of this Miriam from the first; and the matter ended by the young lady at last overcoming her scruples and condescending to one minute slice from the middle of the back. But she had worn throughout these regrettable proceedings a smile, hardly noticeable in itself, but of peculiarly exasperating qualities, if one did happen to remark it. And it had not escaped John William, who sat at the table without speaking a word, feeling, in any case, disinclined to open his mouth before so superior a being as this young lady from England.

In the heat of the afternoon, however, the younger Teesdale found the elder in the parlour, alone too, but walking up and down, as if ill at ease; and John William then had his say.

'Where's everybody?' he asked, putting his head into the room first of all. Then he entered bodily and shut the door behind him. 'Where's our precious guest?' he cried, in no promising tone.

'She's gone to lie down, and so has—'

'That's all right! I sha'n't be sorry myself if she goes on

lying down for the rest of the day. I don't know what you think of her, father, but I do know what I think !'

Mr. Teesdale continued to pace the floor with bent body and badly troubled face, but he said nothing.

'She's what I told you she would be,' proceeded the son, 'in the very beginning. I told you she'd be stuck up—and good Lord, isn't she? I said we didn't want that kind here, and no more we do. No, I'm dashed if we do! Don't you remember? It was the time you read us the old man's letter. I liked the letter and I might like the old man, but I'm dashed if I like his daughter! She doesn't take after her father, I'll be bound.'

'Not unless he is very much changed,' admitted David sadly. 'Still, I think you are rather hard upon her, John William.'

'Hard upon her! Haven't I been watching her? Haven't I ears and eyes in my head, like everybody else? It's only one meal I've sat down to beside her, so far, but one I'll do for me! With her nasty supercilious smile, and her no-thank-you this and no-thank-you that! I never did know anybody take such a delight in refusing things. Look at her about that hare!'

'Yes; and your mother had spent all morning at it. I'm very much afraid she's knocked herself up over it, for she's lying down, too. Your mother is not so strong as she was, John William. I'm very much afraid that matter of Missy has been preying on her nerves.'

'I'd rather have Missy than this here Miriam,' said John William, after a pause, and all at once his voice was full of weariness.

The same thought was in Mr. Teesdale's mind, but he did not give expression to it. Presently he said, still pacing the room with his long-legged, weak-kneed stride:

'I wonder what Mr. Oliver meant when he hinted that I should find Miriam so different from the girls of our day? Where are the tricks and habits that he alluded to? Poor Missy had plenty, but I can't see any in Miriam.'

'Can't you? Then *I* can. Ways of another kind altogether. Did the girls in your day turn up their noses at things before people's faces?'

'No.'

'Did they sneer when they talked to their elders and betters?'

'No; but we are only Miriam's elders, mind—not her betters.'

'Could they smile without looking supercilious, and could they open their mouths without showing their superiority?'

'Of course they could.'

'There you are then! One more question—about Mr. Oliver this time. When you left the old country he hadn't the position he has now, had he?'

'No, no; very far from it. He was just beginning business, and in a small way, too. Now he is a very wealthy man.'

'Then he hadn't got as good an education as he's been able to give his children, I reckon?'

'No, you're right. We went to school together, he and I,' said Mr. Teesdale simply.

'Then don't you see?' cried his son, jumping up from the sofa where he had been sitting, while the old man still walked up and down the room. 'Don't you see, father? Mr. Oliver was warning you against what he himself had suffered from. You bet that Miss Miriam picks him up, and snubs him and sneers at him, just as she does with us!'

Which was the cleverest deduction that this unsophisticated young farmer had ever arrived at in his life; but puzzling constantly over another matter had lent a new activity to his brain, and much worry had sharpened his wits.

Old Teesdale accepted his son's theory readily enough, but yet sorrowfully, and the more so because the more he saw of his old friend's child, the less he liked her.

Indeed, she was not at all an agreeable young person. It appeared that she had been merely reading in her own room, so when Arabella owned to having been asleep in hers, she looked duly and consciously superior. There was something comic about that look of conscious superiority which broke out upon this young lady's face upon the least provocation, but it is difficult to give an impression of it in words—it was so slight, and yet so plain. To be sure, she was the social as well as the intellectual superior of the simple folk at the farm, but that in itself was not so very much to be proud of, and at any rate one would not have expected a tolerably well-educated girl to exhale superiority with every breath. But this was the special weakness of Miss Miriam Oliver. Even the fact that some of the Teesdales read the *Family Cherub* was an opportunity which she could not resist. She took up a number and satirised the *Family Cherub* most unmercifully. Then she was queer about the poor old piano in the best parlour. She played a few bars upon it—she could play very well—and then jumped up shuddering. Certainly the piano

was terribly out of tune; but not more so than this young Englishwoman's manners. In conversation with the Teesdales there was only one subject that really interested her. It was a subject which had been fully dealt with at supper on the Saturday night, when Mrs. Teesdale had waxed very warm thereon. Old Teesdale and Arabella had listened in silence because to them it was not quite such a genial topic. John William had not been there; the misfortune was that he did sit down to the Sunday supper, when Miss Oliver brought up this subject again.

'Did my under-study like cocoa, then?' she inquired, having herself refused to take any, much to Mrs. T.'s discomfiture.

'You mean that impudent baggage?' said the latter. 'Ay, she was the opposite extreme to you, Miriam. She took all she could get, you may be sure! She made the best use of her time!'

'Do tell me some more about her,' said Miss Oliver. 'It is most interesting.'

'Nay, I would rather not speak of her,' replied Mrs. Teesdale, who was only too delighted to do so when sure of a sympathetic hearing. 'It was the most impudent piece of wickedness that ever I heard tell of in my life.'

'The queer thing to me,' remarked Miss Oliver, 'is that you ever should have believed her. Fancy taking such a creature for me! It was scarcely a compliment, Mrs. Teesdale. A more utterly vulgar person one could hardly wish to see.'

'My dear,' began Mr. Teesdale nervously, 'she behaved very badly, we know; yet she had her good points—'

\* 'Hold your tongue, David!' cried his wife, whom nothing incensed more than a good word for Missy. 'She curry-favoured with you, so you try to whitewash her. I wonder what Miriam will think of you? However, Miriam, I can tell you that *I* never believed in her—never once! A brazen, shameless, lying, thieving hussy, that's what she—'

A heavy fist had banged the table at the lower end, so that every cup danced in its saucer, and all eyes were turned upon John William, who sat in his place—trembling a little—very pale—but with eyes that glared alarmingly, first at his mother, then at the guest.

'What did she steal?' he thundered out. 'You may be ashamed of yourself, mother, trying to make the girl out worse

than she was. And you, Miss Oliver—I wonder you couldn't find something better to talk about—something in better taste !'

Miss Oliver put up her pale eyebrows.

'This *is* interesting !' she exclaimed. 'To think that one should come here to learn what is, and what is not good taste ! Perhaps you preferred my—my predecessor to me, Mr. Teesdale ?'

'I did so !' said John William stoutly.

'Ah, I thought as much. She was, of course, rather more in your line.'

'By the Lord,' answered the young man, forgetting himself entirely, 'if you were more in hers it would be the better for them that have to do with you. She could have taught you common civility, at any rate, and common kindness, and two or three other common things that you seem never to have been taught in your life !'

There was a moment's complete silence. Then Miss Oliver got steadily to her feet.

'After that,' she said to David, 'I think my room is the best place for me—and the safest too.'

She proceeded to the door without let or hindrance. All save herself were too much startled to speak or to act. Mr. Teesdale was gazing through the gun-room window with a weary face ; his wife held her side as if it were a physical trouble with her ; while Arabella looked in terror at John William, who was staring unflinchingly at the first woman he had lived to insult. The latter had reached the threshold, where, however, she turned to leave them something to keep.

'It serves me right,' she said. 'I might have known what to expect if I came here.'

*(To be continued.)*

## *At the Sign of the Ship.*

SHADE of the Shepherd, is *Blackwood's* also among the Whigs ? One would deem so, to judge by an article, in the August number, on *The Pretender at Bar-le-Duc*, by Mr. Henry Wolff. It is however a very curious and interesting essay. The Chevalier de St. George is accused by Mr. Wolff's authority, M. Koniarski, of borrowing money which he did not pay, *comme un escroc vulgaire*. 'You forget that this prince is in misfortune, and that he was a king,' said the Duke of Lorraine, his host. King James, whatever his failures, had his heart in the right place about money matters, and if he did not pay money lent to him when he had good hopes to come to his own, it must have been a sore grief to him. I quote an action of his which seems to be unprecedeted. In 1715, as he retreated north, he was obliged, for military reasons, to burn some villages in Scotland. Having failed, and being on the point of leaving Scotland, he wrote thus, from Montrose, to the general on the other side, the famous Duke of Argyll, Jeanie Deans's Duke :

' Among the manifold mortifications I have had in this unfortunate expedition, that of being forced to burn several villages, &c., as the only expedient left me for the public security, is not the smallest. . . . However, as I cannot think of leaving this country without making some provision to repair that loss, I have therefore consigned to the magistrates of — the sum of —, desiring and requiring of you, if not as an obedient subject, at least as a lover of your country, to take care that it be employed to the designed use, that I may have the satisfaction at least of having been the ruin of none, at the time I came to free all. . . . As for your own particular, you might, if you had pleased, joined interest and greatness in your own person, but, though you have refused to do that, I must earnestly request of you to do at least

all in your power to save your country from utter ruin, and to be just, at least, to them, since you are it not to me.'

This is in the hand of a secretary. James adds, himself:

'I thought to write this in my own hand, but had not time.

'JAMES R.'

The king, in fact, in quitting Scotland, 'delivered to General Gordon all the money in his possession (excepting a small sum which he reserved for paying the expenses of himself and suite), with instructions, after paying the army, to apply the residue in indemnifying the inhabitants of the villages burned for the losses sustained by them.' At the same time he put into General Gordon's hands the letter for Argyll already quoted. The letter is at Fingask; it never reached the duke. James added a note for the general, asking him to fill up the blanks with the name of the town where he might find it convenient to leave the money, and the amount of the balance. See Browne's *History of the Highland Clans*, ii. pp. 340-342.

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Mr. Wolff may now see how it chanced that his *escroc* was hardly in a position to pay debts contracted on the eve of an expedition from which, with the sanguine confidence of exiles, James expected other results. The Hanoverian Government had sent 'ill-favoured ones,' as Mr. Wolff quotes Bunyan, to cut his throat on his way to Scotland. James was warned against these emissaries, not as spies, but as cut-throats. He escaped in disguise. His son, later, refused to join in a conspiracy unless the lives of the reigning family in England were guaranteed. All the wickedness, clearly, was not on one side. Mr. Wolff talks a great deal about James 'betraying' a girl at Bar-le-Duc. 'Betraying' is a little absurd. How do we know that the young woman was 'guileless'? About as guileless as Mistress Beatrix Esmond, probably. She could not have expected marriage, however guileless she may have been, and a very considerable latitude in morals was not confined to the Stuarts. Indeed, George IV.—but, as a great writer says, 'that is another story.'

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Did the ancient Greeks worship donkeys? The question sounds like a conundrum, but Mr. Cook answers it with extreme

seriousness in the *Journal* of the Hellenic Society. The ancient Greeks who lived at Mycenæ and elsewhere retained traces of donkey-worship. First there is a fragmentary fresco from Mycenæ, representing three ass-headed figures, or, at least, the upper parts of their bodies. They have human arms, and support on their shoulders a rope or a stick. Of course, this picture may not be a caricature, it *may* represent persons performing some religious ceremony with donkey masks on. In many rites of many peoples the celebrant wears the head and skin of a beast. If the entire fresco survived we might know whether the whole figures are human, but that is just where the glorious uncertainty of the game comes in. If antiquity existed in full, and not in smithereens, there would be no fun in antiquarianism.

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There are very ancient gems in which a beast-headed man carries two lions, dead, from each end of a pole. Mr. Cook thinks he is a donkey-headed man. I doubt it. He thinks the performance religious. I feel no certainty about that. There is the lovely uncertainty of the premisses. Thence we turn to King Midas, to whom Apollo gave ass's ears as a punishment for a difference in musical taste. Another story tells how Midas had satyr's ears, peaked, how somebody laughed at him, how Midas mixed wine in a well, got the scoffer to drink from the well, and so made him drunk. And what on earth has all this to do with ass-worship? Upon my word, I cannot see. The ass is a discordant brute, so Apollo, not satisfied with Midas as a musical critic, gave him ass's ears. Were I a god, I would reward my reviewers so. Ass-worship has nothing to do with the matter. Asses were sacrificed to Apollo, but that is a different affair. Midas is by Mr. Cook called 'the ass king.' Why? It is only one form of the fable that even gives him ass's ears. He catches his enemy by mixing wine in a well. This is 'symbolism,' for the ass is associated with the wine-god. But, in *this* fable, Midas has nothing to do with a donkey. He puts wine in a well so as to make his totally abstaining enemy drink it unawares. The meaning is as clear as crystal; there is no symbolism in the business. Again, this story is said to be 'chthonic,' that is, connected with the worship of the dead, for

The dead are underground,  
A well is underground,  
Midas put wine in a well.

Therefore, Midas and asses are chthonic. Now, I don't say that donkeys were *not* worshipped; I don't say that they were not 'chthonic'—I really have no opinion—but I do say that these methods of argument, these conjectures, these conclusions from such vague premisses, are exactly in the manner of the old 'solar-myth'—the old exploded philological explanations of mythology. No accumulation of evidence equivalent to this about Midas is worth sixpence, in my humble opinion. The learning, indeed, is marvellous. One never read so much donkey-lore; but the reasoning is not on a level with the materials, from which I pick up two or three fragments.

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The only common feature in all the instances, as it seems to me, is the presence of a donkey in various ancient legends and works of art. Nothing shows, in the general run of cases, a connection with religion. We do not know whether Midas originally had ass's ears, or satyr's ears, or ordinary ears. The ass, so unmusical a brute, may well lend his ears as a punishment to an unmusical king. A servant, or some one else, discovering the secret of the ears, and unable to keep his secret, digs a hole in the earth, and whispers the secret into the hole. A hole in the earth is not necessarily 'chthonic.' The fable is clearly a *moral* fable. 'Walls have ears;' do not tell a king's secret even if you bury it underground. That, and no reference to chthonic worship, is the manifest moral intention. Again, there is a donkey in hell—yes, but again as part of a *moral* parable. In hell a man called *Oknos* (Delay) spins a rope, which a donkey eats as fast as he spins it. Perhaps it was a halter of hay. A donkey is chosen, because he adds a point of ridicule to the punishment. It is the same sort of torment as rolling a stone up a hill or filling a perforated pot with water. The story does not make the donkey a chthonic animal. We have merely a moral parable, like the economic parable of Midas converting all he touches, including his food, into gold. There *may* have been a donkey totem-tribe among the ancestors of the Greeks, and the ass may, like other animals, have survived feebly as a figure in sacrifice. But the evidence is infinitely precarious, and to adduce precarious evidence is to weaken our conclusion. Meanwhile we have the *graffito*, the caricature scratched on a street wall in ancient Rome, of a man adoring a crucified ass—a jibe, apparently, at some early Christian, for there was a pagan legend about Jewish ass-worship. That

wine-gods rode on asses is probably only part of the joyous grotesque side of their character. But the tendency to use arguments in mythology, which would not be accepted as arguments in any other field of discussion, seems to beset mythologists of every denomination.

\* \* \*

Lord Dufferin's *Poems and Verses by Helen, Lady Dufferin*,<sup>1</sup> is really a delightful book. It is not only the charm of the poems, but Lord Dufferin's remarks on family history, which interest the reader. The brief introduction is romance and history, as it were, in shorthand. I do not know whether the piety of a descendant kept out Johnson's remarks on Thomas Sheridan, or whether they were reckoned too familiar for quotation: 'Why, sir, Sherry is dull, naturally dull; but it must have taken a great deal of pains to make him what we now see him. Such an excess of stupidity, sir, is not in nature.' This must have been the doctor's fun; there cannot have been a dull Sheridan. Sir Thomas, one of the Seven Men of Moidart, was, we learn, a cousin of Prince Charles, who was so careful in seeing that his bed was aired, on some uncomfortable island. Another Sheridan was busy in the intrigues of 1753. The Blackwoods, Lord Dufferin's ancestors on the other side, were staunch to Queen Mary. One of them was indiscreet enough to congratulate Charles IX., in a Latin poem, on the massacre of St. Bartholomew. The unhappy king hated the subject, but the Scottish Guard took a hand in the killing. 'A soldier only has his orders,' said Captain Hedzoff, but this exploit is not among the glories of Quentin Durward's corps. It were unfair to pick the plums out of Lord Dufferin's introduction, and to select a story of the cherub which watches over book-collectors. Fortunately the author means to edit a collection of the late Lady Dufferin's Letters, which must rival those of Lady Louisa Stuart. The essay on Keys is a promise of excellence. But man, at least, can do without keys; a door key is, in itself, more than a sufficient burden, and a despatch-box key can be worn on the watch-chain. Madness lies in the way of more keys, but woman 'absolutely bristles with them,' is always losing them, and has no resource but an appeal to St. Anthony. The good saint does not listen to Protestants, and, while there are books

<sup>1</sup> Murray

and MSS. to be lost, life is even too complicated, without the additional burden of keys.

\* \* \*

An odd character M. de Goncourt must be. He publishes his journal ; it is like an old number of a society paper. He tells tales of his friends and associates, such tales as it was not, of old, thought right to tell, still less to print. He is chiefly full of remarks (laudatory) on his own works, and when we read of a play of his in rehearsal, we unsympathetically hope that it will be a failure. It often is ; and then the gentle reader rejoices. Still, one reads on, and the remarks on M. Daudet are always interesting, except when we learn more about his health than a discreet person would reveal. The parable of the Mourning Lady in an omnibus is very good. She told how she lost her first child ; all the omnibus wept. The very conductor concealed his features in his handkerchief. The death of the second child renewed the emotion. Over the demise of the third the omnibus regained its calm. The fourth child was devoured by a crocodile, on the banks of the Nile. Here the whole omnibus laughed ; yet that child suffered most. Why did they laugh ? It is a parable for authors. M. de Goncourt hates to think that some day the earth will be cold, and the Last Man, even, will not carry his bat. M. de Goncourt shrinks from the thought, because *then* his literary fame will expire. What, not till then ? Perhaps this also is a joke of his. He does not make many on purpose.

\* \* \*

The following is a true fishing story. I was angling in the Test, where trout are educated. I caught one. There is no corroborative evidence, for I was alone. Not being bothered with a basket, I put him back again, taking the hook tenderly out of his mouth. I then took up my rod, but the line somehow had got hitched, as I thought, in a weed up-stream. I jerked at it, could not get it clear, and found that, when I dropped it in the water at my feet, it had caught another trout, a bigger one, and he had gone up-stream. So innocent are trout, now and then, even in the Test.

\* \* \*

‘I respect Millar, sir, he raised the price of literature,’ says Dr. Johnson. And who lowered it, and made the Libraries

clamour for cheap three-volume novels? I presume that the amateurs did this. The whole three-volume business is a mystery. The Librarian does not send you what you want, he sends a box full of imbecilities in three volumes. These are written by amateurs who probably pay for their whistle. They choke out good books, but why does the Librarian buy them? This is one mystery. Surely Libraries should keep a taster, to reject all the trash. We all prefer novels in one volume, the French plan, but will it pay to publish them? The public does hate to buy a book; it will continue to get one-volume novels from libraries, and the amateur, for all that I can see, will still supply the bulk of them, and lose his money over it. Rich people, who pay half a guinea for a seat in a theatre, grudge even a shilling for a book. They like the weekly litter of the library to be removed weekly. The public does not read books: that is the plain truth. The public reads newspapers, and, in very earnest moods, magazines. Yet the gigantic waste out-put of novels goes on, and will go on, while authors are allowed to pay for the pleasure of being in print. There never was an age that read less, or that cackled more about what it does not read.

\* \* \*

Something was said here lately about the Melbourne Public Library, and about the extraordinary taboos placed on certain books. My information, if I remember correctly, was taken from the *Publishers' Circular*. Five copies of a Melbourne newspaper have been sent to me since, with private letters. From the article in the journal, it seems that my information was wrong, or was by me misunderstood. Melbourne has had a public library since 1852, and it is much used by the citizens. There are 423,669 visitors annually: suppose every citizen goes once, then the whole population goes. It was the 'lending branch' of the library that my information applied to, if it applied at all. As the lending branch is only some two years old it is not exhaustive of English literature. At all events, I make my apology to Melbourne. 'I burn my faggot,' and regret having been misled, or having misconceived the statements before me. As I have those no longer, I know not if the error was in myself, or in my 'sources.'

A. LANG.



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